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Is “Famine” the Right Word?

Just when Ethiopia seemed to be on a roll, new worries about hunger arise. Suddenly Ethio-pessimism is back in fashion.

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By Barry Hillenbrand (*Debre Markos 63–65*)

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2007 Ethiopia celebrated its Julian calendar millennium with the start of the year 2000 (EC). There were celebrations, speeches and a fair amount of optimism. The optimism was not without foundation. Ethiopia was making progress. The economy was growing. The International Monetary Fund ranked Ethiopia as the fastest growing non-oil-exporting country in sub-Saharan Africa. Ethiopia’s GDP growth was about 7.5 per cent in 2008. Employment was improving. Exports, led by coffee, were up 18 per cent. Manufacturing was increasing. Foreign investors were cautiously showing up in Addis with money to start all sorts of projects from breweries to flower farms.

Just as important, infrastructure was being installed at an impressive clip. Roads were being built: main transport arteries increased from 3,800 km in 2000 to nearly 5,500 km by end of 2007. Hydroelectric power was

being harnessed and rural electrification was slowly inching its way through the countryside lighting up towns and villages. The number of houses with electricity increased from 5 to 8 percent and is scheduled to reach 15 percent by 2010. Coffee prices were good and the grain harvests were increasing to the point that the country had a slight surplus. Farmers were employing new technologies. School enrollments have dramatically increased and health

care is improving. Sure, Ethiopia remained one of the poorest places on earth, but it was taking baby steps toward development.

It is politically unfashionable to say so publicly, but despite some serious shortcomings on human rights, the government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, has proven itself surprisingly competent, perhaps the most capable administration Ethiopia has ever had. Ethiopian expatriates and members of the Opposition parties — to say nothing of political prisoners and the hobbled press — will howl



FIGHTING MALNUTRITION: Child at Harar’s Bisidomo hospital *BBC*

at such claims, but a good argument can be made that Meles' time in office is beginning to resemble something of golden era, if, that is, you put aside serious problems concerning human and political rights. Of course many people are unwilling to overlook such important matters as arbitrary arrests and torture.

Surely the past year, 2008, was pretty good. It never harms when the Olympic team comes home laden with medals. Nor is it such a bad thing when the nation manages to avoid a war with Eritrea after the U.N. peacekeeping force abandoned its operations along the tense border area. More good news came from Somalia. At year's end the Ethiopian Army began a full withdrawal from Somalia after two bloody years of occupation. The mission of deposing the old Islamist regime was accomplished, said Prime Minister Meles. Once the Ethiopians were gone, new groups of Islamists took control and Somalia looked no nearer a political settlement then before the costly invasion. It may even

turn out that Somalis may once again pose a threat to Ethiopia. Nonetheless, Meles declared victory and withdrew. It was nice to have the boys back home.

So just as Ethiopia was feeling increasingly self-confident, disturbing reports of drought and famine began to surface. The March to May *belg* rains arrived late and were below average. This combined with two consecutive poor rainy seasons resulting in below average

harvests and diminished pasture land. (To add to the puzzle, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, reported that the *meher* crop harvested in October 2007 was of bumper proportions.) Most seriously hit by the drought in 2008 were the south and southeast regions of the country populated largely

by pastoral peoples who were forced to slaughter valued animals because of lack of fodder.

The summer of 2008 brought pictures of malnourished children arriving in increasing numbers at various feeding stations throughout the southern and southeastern part of Ethiopia. International aid organizations began sending out warnings that famine was threatening Ethiopia, that millions of people will need food assistance and that if the money for relief shipments could not be raised, millions would die as they had in the infamous famines of 1974 and 1984–85. Journalists arrived in Ethiopia and wrote heart-wrenching stories, complete with dramatic pictures, about mothers' being unable to feed their children.

The drought crisis was magnified by war and rebellion. Hungry refugees from Somalia moved to the Ethiopian side of the border. Rebels from the Oromo Liberation Front — along with gangs of *shittas* — roamed the countryside attacking government posts and food aid convoys. The Ethiopian Army eager to suppress the OLF, as well as Somali rebel groups, closed roads, raided and destroyed villages and, if some reports are to be believed, did its share of pillage, rape and murder. The aid agencies that have been distributing food for years in the area fell victim to both the rebels and the Ethiopian Army. They accused Meles of hindering their ability to help the victims of the drought. Some pulled their workers out of the region.

Meanwhile Meles' government launched a counter offensive. It claimed that the reports of the crisis were vastly exaggerated. At one point as a result of complaints from Meles, the U.N. reduced its estimate of the number of people needing aid and then later increased it. In an interview with Time magazine in August, Meles admitted "we have pockets of severe malnutrition in some districts in the south and an emergency situation in the Somali region. It's not small to those who are suffering, but it is a manageable problem."

Meles is keenly aware of the political risks of dealing with famine. The inability to recognize famines brought down Haile Selassie and weakened the grip



WAITING FOR HELP: Mother and child at Somali region food station

of the Derg. Meles does not wish to go down that path. But he also does not want to exaggerate the severity of the crisis just when Ethiopia seemed to be doing so well. Said Meles in the Time interview: "When you have an emergency, there is the urge to do whatever it takes to see people get assistance. [But that can mean] the name of the game is [to] include a bit of hyperbole, and that can convey the message that the situation is hopeless when in fact it is not, and that might do some lasting damage, given the fact that all investors take their information and make their assessments on the basis of the 24-hour news cycle. Famine has wreaked havoc in Ethiopia for so long, it would be stupid not to be sensitive to the risk of such things occurring. But there has not been a famine on our watch — emergencies, yes, but no famines."

The government's creditability was called into question when Douglas Alexander, Britain's Secretary for International Development, visited Ethiopia on a fact-finding tour. He claimed that when he toured a hospital in Kebri Dehar in the Somali Region, local officials took malnourished children out of the emergency feeding ward and turned them out into the street. Ethiopia, Alexander said, did not want the world to know of the severity of the famine which was ravishing the country. Government officials were hiding the dying because they were fearful that pictures of famished children would scare away investors.

Alexander stormed back to Addis for a meeting with Meles which was described as "candid and forthright" which is diplomatic cant for angry and blunt. Alexander said, "I made it clear that, if [the stories of removing the children were] true, that was unconscionable and wholly wrong." Alexander threatened to hold up UK aid to Ethiopia. Of course, that never happened, but the incident shows how volatile and impassioned matters become when talk of famine is in the air.

Yet the damage was done. Ethiopia's name was once again inextricably linked with famine, hunger, poverty and starving children. Forgotten was the glitter of Olympic gold or that Ethiopian musicians had played in front of admiring audiences

in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and New York's Lincoln Center. One writer suggests that Ethio-pessimism once again was taking hold of the country.

The good news is that the *meher* rains of 2008 in western Ethiopia were satisfactory. Harvests were good and that reduced some of the demand for food. But still people in the south and southeastern part of the country were suffering. The fall rains started late and were not really very heavy, despite one freakish downpour which resulted in floods.

The government along with aid organizations once again adjusted its estimate of the number of people who will need emergency food aid this year. The new number is 4.9 million, which is down by about 1.5 million from earlier estimates. "Due to conducive Meher rains in western Ethiopia," said Mitku Mitiku Kassa, State Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, "There is no increase in severely malnourished children. According to reports, about 34,000 children are acutely malnourished."

In addition to those getting emergency aid, millions more get what has become routine food aid. The simple fact is that Ethiopia's population is increasing so fast that even bumper crops cannot fully feed the nation. In recent years 3 to 5 million Ethiopians are deemed "food insecure" each year and receive food aid from a consortium of international aid organizations. While these numbers seem staggering, they are now almost normal and do not approach a famine emergency. Aid workers say that in a true famine more than 20 million people would be deemed food insecure and require food aid.

In January the U.N. sent out an appeal seeking \$460 million in contributions for food for Ethiopia. The U.S. is estimating it will spend more than \$500 million for food aid in Ethiopia in 2009. Despite the problems and money shortfall, aid relief has been pouring in and is being distributed. There is enough food. So Ethiopia does not have a famine. But getting food into all the sad hungry mouths is still a difficult task. Many will go unfed despite best efforts. And no one knows what this year's rains will be like. 🇪🇹



Ethiopia news

Compiled and written by Barry Hillenbrand

A new political star — in prison

As always, Ethiopia's political saga continues to take surprising turns. In a move that outraged human rights advocates, the government re-arrested the leader of Ethiopia's Unity for Democracy and Justice Party, Birtukan Mideksa. Birtukan, 34, was among the members of Opposition parties arrested and tried after the contested 2005 parliamentary elections. The group was convicted of treason and sentenced to life in prison. But all the politicians were released from prison in 2007 after signing a document effectively admitting their guilt and apologizing.



BACK IN PRISON: Birtukan Mideksa was rearrested and faces treason charges

Many of the Opposition leaders left Ethiopia for exile after they were released from prison, but Birtukan stayed

and began building a new Opposition party. During a visit to Sweden late last year, Birtukan denied having asked for a pardon. She said that she was not guilty of any crime. When she refused a government demand to retract her statement, she was re-arrested and sentenced again to life in prison. She is being held in solitary confinement in a windowless 10-foot by 13-foot cell in Ethiopia's Kaliti prison. In January, she briefly went on hunger strike.

Birtukan, a lawyer and former judge, is the first woman to head a major Ethiopian political party. Her imprisonment changes Ethiopia's political landscape a year and a half before the next scheduled parliamentary elections. Her Unity for Democracy and Justice Party is an outgrowth of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, which was a major force in the disputed 2005 elections. She is widely seen as the party's most charismatic figure and a prime minister hopeful, with potential for

wide support among members of Ethiopia's two largest ethnic groups, Oromos and Amharas — if she ever gets out of prison.

Ethiopia out of Somalia



HEADING HOME: Ethiopian troops leaving Somalia after two years of occupation duty

Two years after Ethiopia invaded Somalia to prop up a pro-Western transitional government, Ethiopian troops pulled out of Mogadishu. In Addis Prime Minister Meles said that the mission had been accomplished and that all troops will be withdrawn from the country. The scene in Mogadishu was not pretty after the Ethiopian exit. According to a CNN report, Islamist militants took almost full control of Mogadishu, less than 24 hours after Ethiopian troops pulled out.

Forces from different Islamist groups — including the hard-line al-Shabab, which the United States has designated a terror organization — immediately seized the bases the Ethiopians abandoned. "The city is almost under Islamist rule," a local journalist told CNN. "You can hear different names of the Islamist groups taking control in many parts of the city." The journalist said the militants were in "full force" in most of Mogadishu. And in a final touch of irony, both Ethiopia and the United States wel-

comed the selection of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as the new president of Somalia. Sheikh Sharif was head of the Islamic Courts Union which Ethiopian troops ousted two years ago when it invaded. Prime Minister Meles declared himself happy with the selection.

The birr weakens against the dollar

Good news for PCVs in Ethiopia (if they have access to dollars). The value of the birr against the U.S. dollar dropped significantly. In the first week of January commercial banks paid 10.46 Birr to buy a dollar, up from 9.95 Birr paid in the previous week. That meant that the Birr depreciated by about five per cent. This was the first time the birr traded officially at a double-digit price against the U.S. dollar.

It is also the first time the birr depreciated against the dollar by such a large margin since the government devalued the birr against the dollar in the early '90s. For much of the time during the era of the Derg, the dollar was worth about five birr. In the early '90s it was set at 2.07 birr by the new government. Since then the rate has floated upward but it is now firmly above 10 to a dollar in inter-bank trading.

Mengistu sentenced to death — in absentia

Former Marxist ruler Mengistu Haile Mariam, recently sentenced to death by Ethiopia's supreme court, will remain in Zimbabwe under the protection of President Robert Mugabe's government.

"Our position has not changed. He remains our guest in Zimbabwe. He will remain in Zimbabwe and we will protect him as we've always done," Deputy Information Minister Bright Matonga said in May just after the Supreme Court's decision. The court sentenced Mengistu to death granting a prosecution appeal that the life sentence he received in 2007 did not match the seriousness of the crimes.

Mengistu has lived a life of extremely comfort in exile in Zimbabwe since he was driven from power in 1991. His

fate became somewhat less secure when Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe was forced to share power with the leader of the opposition. Movement for Democratic Change leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai says that "We don't want dictators on our land. The people of Ethiopia suffered for such a long time." But so far both Mugabe and Mengistu are holding on. Stay tuned.

Troops to Darfur

As if the Ethiopian military was not already thinly



NEW BLUE HELMETS: Ethiopia troops head for peacekeeping duty in Darfur *Abdi Warsameh/AP*

spread what with its deployment in Somalia and the Eritrea border — to say nothing of fighting rebels in the Ogaden and elsewhere — more than 300 Ethiopian troops arrived in Darfur in December to boost the strength of the joint United Nations-African Union force. Their principal duties will include conducting security patrols, enhancing security and fostering confidence within the local population, as well as conducting escorts for humanitarian convoys. The Security Council authorized a U.N. force of about 26,000 uniformed personnel, but currently it stands at only around 10,000.

That all shall be counted, sort of

The numbers from Ethiopia's recent census have been published. The totals are staggering: Ethiopia's population has risen by 23.4 million people over the past 14 years, to its current 76.9 million. But it is the composition of that 76.9 million that is causing unhappiness. Especially annoyed are Muslims who were numbered at 33.9 percent of the nation. Muslims claim they represent 45 and 50



BEST BUDS: Mengistu gets a warm welcome in Zimbabwe

percent of the population. The Central Statistical Agency (CSA) said Ethiopian Orthodox population makes up 43.5 percent of the country while Protestant Christians are 18.6 percent, for a total Christian population of 62.1 percent. Articles in the Jimma Times quote critics who claim the census was flawed in its methodology because it was influenced by the country's ethno-political and religious divisions. In Jimma town, for example, there has been a large growth in Muslims encouraged by aid organizations financed by the Gulf States. The census failed to note that increase, say the critics. In addition others claim that the census failed to capture the true numbers of the nomadic Muslim inhabitants in the Somali, Oromia and Afar states. And what about all those Muslims driven into southeastern Ethiopia by from the civil war in Somalia? Were they counted?

Ethiopian Christians are content with the census numbers and blame western organizations that over the years had made unverified estimates that put the Muslim population much too high. During the last few years, for example, the U.S. State Department estimated Muslims to be around 50 percent of the population, but did not cite their source. These estimates were widely repeated, but may not have been accurate, says the General Director of the CSA, Samia Zekaria. "There is a difference between those making guesses and the work CSA does on the ground by going door to door"

Other groups are annoyed. Evangelical Christians rejected the census claiming that their number should have been around 7 percent more, for a total of 25 percent of the country. Opposition party members have condemned the census numbers for the Addis Ababa and Amhara Regions, claiming that millions have not been counted. The reason: these two regions are traditionally Opposition power bases. Similarly, members of Parliament representing the Gurage and Oromo ethnic groups have criticized the census for under-counting their ethnic groups. The Chairman of the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement said around 460,000 Oromos were not counted in Oromia. Recount anyone?

Scary accident

Taking buses was the way to go for PCVs in the old days in Ethiopia and still is the preferred mode of transport for the PCVs now serving there. Bus stations were always a bit nerve racking and chaotic. Now they are more so. An apparent accidental hand-grenade explosion wounded 33 people, nine seriously, in January at the all too familiar central bus station in Addis.

"This does not appear to be a terrorist attack. It seems a passenger was carrying the grenade in their (sic) luggage and it detonated accidentally," federal police commander Demash Hailu told Reuters. That's reassuring: someone was just careless with the grenade tucked in there along with the chickens, 10 kilos of teff and a bag of khat.

Hand over the loot

President Girma Wolde-Giorgis has written to the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Library and the Cambridge University Library seeking the restitution of more than 400 items often called the Treasures of Magdala, which were looted by British soldiers following a battle in 1868. According to an article in The Independent on Sunday, the President wrote: "I must state that Ethiopians have long grieved at the loss of this part of their national heritage. The time has come for the return of Ethiopia's looted treasures."

Among the items being held in the Britain is an 18-carat gold crown and more than 300 mostly Coptic Christian manuscripts. The issue is particularly sensitive because many of the artifacts hold religious significance. These include nine *tabots*, or sacred wooden altar slabs, which are recognized as so holy that the British Museum has pledged never to display them. When a *tabot* was returned in 2005 after being discovered in the back of an Edinburgh church, thousands of people turned out to greet its



ROYAL BOOTY: The golden crown of an Ethiopian emperor

return in Addis. British museums have in the past resisted calls for artifacts from their collections to be returned to their countries of origin. Museums argue in that the artifacts are better off in Britain because anyone in the world can view them.

Elephants now on view

Ethiopia is inviting tourists to visit its dwindling elephant herd. The Babile Wildlife Sanctuary near Harar is the first to offer visits specifically aimed at seeing elephants, whose numbers have been ravaged by poaching and decades of neglect. There are around 300 in Babile, which is also home to a national symbol: the rare black-maned lion, depicted on Ethiopia's currency. In 2008 the government invested heavily in hotels, airports and other infrastructure in the area, hoping to boost tourism earnings by 15 percent to around \$200 million.

Save the wolves

Scientists from Ethiopia and Britain are working in the Bale Mountains to save an Ethiopian wolf pack. The population of wolves has dwindled to about 500 in recent years due to the ravages of rabies. Wolves pick up rabies from large packs of wild dogs, estimated at more than 40,000, which also roam the mountains. The dogs, originally brought

in by shepherds, are a reservoir for rabies. The wolves have also been weakened by a loss of their habitate as human settlements have spread into the mountain areas. "If left unchecked, rabies is likely to kill over two-thirds of all wolves in Bale's Web Valley, and spread further, with wolves dying horrible deaths and numbers dwindling to perilously low levels," says Dr. Claudio Sillero of Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Unit who is working to vaccinate the wolves.

During mating season wolf packs break up, and wolves mate with the dogs, catching their diseases in the process.

A German map of Addis

Even in the days when the city was half its present

size, Addis was never an easy city to navigate. All those circles and diagonal streets were most confusing. Now to help lost tourists, business people and residents (to say nothing of PCVs in Addis from Dessie to sample the big city life) a new map of Addis has been produced by the Germans. Said Sultan Mohammed, Director General of Ethiopia Map Agency which worked with a team from the University of Applied Science Berlin to produce the map, "From the outset, we had agreed that the map should be of German quality, as German quality is recognized as the best by almost all in the world." The map is the first to include a mini-bus route map, which should be an immense help to tourists navigating around the city. On sale at hotels and bookshops, the map cost 50 birr.

New bridge over muddy waters

The long, zigzagging drive down one side of the Blue Nile Gorge and up the other side has long been punctuated by the quick flat drive over a 60-year-old bridge that always seemed sturdy if completely stolid. Now it has been replaced by a new, rather jauntily designed 303-meter long bridge. The bridge was built and paid for by the Japanese government as part of a major upgrade of the road between Addis and Debre Markos. Located 200 km northwest of Addis, the new bridge was built adjacent to the old one.

Because the new bridge has a width of nine meters, two-way traffic will be allowed. The old bridge had only a single, alternating lane. During the dedication ceremony of the bridge, Prime Minister Meles said: "This new bridge will herald the beginning of the erection of more bridges, dams, and other development activities across the river that will turn the Nile into an ideal in spinning up the country's economy rather than being a bottleneck for development."

Love — or hate — that weed

It's become a little confusing to figure out just what the Ethiopian government thinks about khat. First the Post Office issues lovely commemorative stamps featuring pictures of khat plants looking as innocent and attractive as lilies of the valley.



RABIES ENDANGERED: Keep the wild dogs away from these Ethiopian wolves

Then the same week in September when the stamps are issued, the Ethiopian Postal Service arranges for researchers from the Addis Ababa University to



PROFITABLE WEED: Just the stamps for those letters you are sending back home to the folks

give a public lecture on the chemical content of khat (all bad stuff) and the toll khat takes on the body (oh, for example, sleeplessness, thirst, constipation, loss of appetite, increased blood pressure and a racing pulse rate). Khat chewing, the lecturers warned, can also lead to heart disease and hemorrhoids, as well as

mild mental problems like forgetfulness, depression and — worse case scenario here — insanity. The lecture is held in the conference hall of the Ethiopian Postal Service. The stamps are on sale nearby.

The lecture followed written warnings issued by the authorities in Addis to khat retailers that they should cease allowing khat chewing in their shops. The shop owners were threatened with severe measures such as shop closings if the houses were found allowing people to chew on the premises. Here's the confusion: khat selling is legal. And indeed khat growing is a big export earner for the country. And khat chewing houses have become fashionable in Addis where customers are charged as little as 2 birr for a simple place to chew, and as much as 300 birr for a room. Of critical note: Prime Minister Meles spoke out against khat chewing not long before the crackdown began.

Beans and flowers


In late January Prime Minister Meles called in representatives of Ethiopia's two major agricultural exports for a harsh lecture. He was deeply concerned about the fall in exports of both coffee and cut flowers. According to people who attended the coffee meeting, the Prime Minister threatened to "cut off their hands" if they did not release some of the vast coffee stocks exporters were holding back. Meles accused exporters holding on to their stocks of coffee because the price prices had collapsed. They were betting that if they waited long enough

prices would rebound.

But Meles was having now of it. Eleni Gabre-Madhin, chief executive officer of the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange said Meles used very strong language. "He gave us a stern talking to, and I think it was all done to say 'You need to adjust to the new reality'," she told Reuters in an interview. "I think the message was fairly clear: the market is out of line and there is evidence of stockholding."

Coffee earned more than \$525 million on exports of 170,888 metric tons. Ethiopia exports mostly high quality and high priced arabicas. But coffee prices on the global market have fallen by more than a third in the last 12 months. Benchmark arabica futures were trading around \$1.205 per pound at the end of January, down 29 percent from a peak of \$1.696 in February 2008. Production forecasts are lower for this season by nearly 15 percent. Some southern regions of the country suffered near total crop failure. So exporters are hoarding some of their stocks waiting for world prices to recover.

This may be good for the exporters, but bad for the country's foreign exchange earnings. The global credit crunch is likely to curb foreign investment and development aid to Ethiopia, Meles told the exporters. Meles said that he felt entitled to speak frankly to exporters because they received loans and other support from his government. Coffee accounts for nearly 60 percent of all of the country's export earnings. Some 15 million farmers, working small plots of land, grow the beans mostly in the misty forested highlands of its southwestern region.

The problem with flowers is a bit different. Meles said that a number of flower growers were slow getting the land granted to them by the government into production. In a meeting in the prime minister's office, Meles ask when these farmers were going to begin operations. Parcels of valuable land secured to produce flowers, a new and potentially valuable export crop, were being left idle. The prime minister reminded the growers that many other farmers were eager to receive government land and that, indeed, many of them wanted to start producing flowers. 

Axum Obelisk

All will be revealed — someday

The Great Stele of Axum is now erect, but sadly obscured

OKAY, we'll admit our profound disappointment. The HERALD really had high hopes for its coverage of the final restoration of the famed obelisk at Axum. For years we have been methodically chronicling the long saga of Ethiopia's efforts to secure the return of the grand stone stele that the Italian fascists pillaged from Axum in 1936. The obelisk was brought to Rome where it was erected in a traffic circle.

We are sure you remember reading about all the twists and turns of this saga in issue after issue of the HERALD. We wrote about Ethiopia's stern demands that Italy return the plunder. We explained Italy's repeated promises to do the right thing. Nothing happened. We noted that in great detail.

We were elated when a deal between the two countries was finally signed through the good offices of UNESCO. But then more delays followed as one obstacle after another blocked the project of returning the obelisk to its proper place. Who was going to pay for the return of the three massive pieces of stone of the disassembled obelisk? How would they be transported since they were too big and heavy to

travel by road across Ethiopian bridges. Flying them was a possibility but then it was discovered that the runways near Axum were too short for planes bearing such an Axumite weight to land. The runways were lengthened. What about the thin atmosphere? Could the planes handle that? Well, yes, if they landed at dawn.




NOT A SPACE LAUNCH: Behind the flags and scaffolding is Axum's resurrected obelisk

Once the three pieces of the stele were delivered by a giant Russian transport plane, new problems arose: could the stele safely be re-erected in its old site which, archaeologists discovered, was atop an ancient burial mound of historic importance? More years passed. The HERALD never failed to bring you complete coverage.

Finally we were delighted to learn that all the problems had been overcome and that the famed Axum Stele, put back together with specially designed screws and braces, was finally re-erected. It was unveiled with great ceremony and brought joy to the people of Axum. We heard that bands played. Prime Minister Meles gave a speech. The Tigray state Commission on Tourism opened an office in Axum. We expected big things. We hoped to offer you dramatic pictures of the newly restored stele, standing erect and lovely in all its solitary glory. It would be worth all those years of waiting.

But, alas, when we saw the pictures available, we must say we were disappointed. In order to raise the stele a giant scaffolding, looking for all the world like a NASA launching gantry, was erected. After the unveiling took place, the scaffolding remained, obscuring the stele. For weeks we searched the Internet in hopes of finding a picture without the gantry. No luck. Perhaps, like a line-backer who has had his femur put back together with titanium screws, the stele needs months in rehab before all the supports can be removed. We don't know.

The good news is that we now have an opportunity to once again write about the Stele of Axum in the HERALD. We promise you that you will be the first to see clear — and heroic — pictures of our beloved Obelisk once they become available. Please check your next issue of the HERALD. 



All the way around the Horn

Changes everywhere, still much is (sadly) unchanged

By Shlomo Bachrach (Staff 66–68)

THE NEW YEAR BEGINS with its major changes rippling across the entire Horn of Africa, yet much remains unchanged. The only way to understand the situation in any part of the region is to consider the entire Horn — Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti. Here's a country by country rundown.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia confirmed on January 2 that its army had already started the promised withdrawal from Somalia. A day earlier, the BBC reported that the clampdown on pirates by warships from the EU and others, including the U.S., India, Russia and China, was beginning to work. Despite numerous pirate attacks on passing ships in December, only two were successful. This is a steep decline from previous months. The most effective deterrent seems to be helicopters dispatched from naval vessels answering calls from merchant ships under attack.

The severe food shortage in the entire Horn continues unchanged. The lack of rainfall in Ethiopia, primarily in the Southeast and Southwest regions, is to blame for crop failures and dry water holes, but the problem is made worse by political failures. Ethiopia refuses to address the need for both land reform and an urgent campaign to help millions of farmers increase crop yields. Still, farm incomes in the areas where rains have been good are holding firm as many farmers benefit from the same higher prices that are causing painful inflation for others.

Eritrea's dilemma

Eritrea, which is also experiencing weak rains, is chronically short of food even in good years. It has failed to develop other sectors of its economy. It evicted USAID and other aid organizations, and discourages foreign investment by its confrontational stance towards nearly everyone. As a result, Eritrea doesn't earn enough foreign exchange from exports or tourism to buy food. Self-imposed isolation under President Isaias has intentionally limited development assistance on the grounds that aid creates dependence and stifles local initiative. The result is an economy that is increasingly dependent on remittances from Eritreans abroad, and on payments from a few regional governments such as Libya and Qatar — creating another kind of dependence. Eritrea's role as a supply conduit to the Islamists in Somalia should be seen in this context.

Eritrean opposition websites report growing unrest within the country. Resistance to some of Isaias' policies appears to be rising. Isaias' refusal to deal with foreign agencies, they claim, is edging malnutrition to dangerous levels, and the military is unwilling to use force against fellow Eritreans in the event of civil disturbance. If accurate, this represents a looming threat to Isaias, who rules as an absolute autocrat. With no independent domestic media and access by foreign journalists restricted, it is hard to substantiate these stories. But surely the continuing stream of defections to Ethiopia and

Sudan, especially among those facing the draft, is evidence of discontent. Some defectors now get visas to the U.S., a recent change in policy by the Bush Administration.

Somalia's anarchy

Somalia's food crisis is caused by both the severe drought and the massive breakdown of order that has led to the dislocation of millions of its people. Conditions have become so bad that even prime livestock — goats and camels of reproductive age — are being slaughtered. Relief agencies say that the country is approaching total famine, yet some humanitarian groups have reluctantly suspended operations after repeated attacks on their workers.

In 1992 hundreds of thousands of Somalis died before a belated UN relief effort began. At that time — as now — relief workers were regularly attacked and their supplies stolen by warlords, who turned around and sold their loot to a desperate population. This time the raiders are Islamist extremists hoping to chase all foreigners, including humanitarian NGOs, out of the country.

The sudden increase in piracy off the Somali coast surprised — and worried — the world. After all, ten percent of the world's seaborne trade passes through the nearby Gulf of Aden to and from the Suez Canal. In November, several hundred crewmembers were held captive along with more than

twenty ships. Estimates of ransoms already paid have reached \$150 million. Many questions about the pirates remain unanswered. How did they suddenly get the equipment, and the skills, to do what they did? Who trained and advised them? What are the links, if any, to Gulf politics, to Islamist politics or to Somali factions?

One source estimates that 17 ships are still being held, including the Ukrainian ship captured in late September carrying a load of 33 Soviet-era tanks and assorted arms. The crew and owners of the ship say that the tanks were destined for Kenya, but it is widely believed that their actual destination is South Sudan, a semiautonomous region that will probably opt for independence over Khartoum's objections in a scheduled 2011 referendum.

An even bigger prize was the Saudi supertanker, *Sirius Star*, captured by the pirates on November 15 with a cargo of 2 million barrels of oil worth more than \$100 million, depending, of course, what oil price you use to calculate the value. The pirates were said to have demanded \$25 million in ransom, but settled for \$3 million dramatically parachuted to the deck of the tanker. The pirates divided the loot and turned the ship back over to the 25-member crew. But one of the pirates' getaway boats was swamped as it set off at high speed, drowning five pirates. The body of one of the pirates was washed up on shore with more than \$150,000 in cash stuffed in his pockets.

These high profile trophies finally provoked a serious response from major naval powers. The multinational armada dispatched to the region seems to be turning the tide against the pirates.

Ethiopia's scramble to adjust

Ethiopia's withdrawal from Somalia signifies a failure to achieve its objective of installing a non-Islamist government in Mogadishu. This is also a failure for Washington, which fully supported Ethiopia's anti-Islamist efforts. As of now, it is unclear whether Ethiopia has fully withdrawn from Somalia, maintaining only a defensive position on its side of the border, or whether some Ethiopian troops will remain inside or periodically reenter So-



SPOT ON THE MONEY: A canister containing as much as \$3 million in ransom cash is dropped to pirates aboard a hijacked supertanker off the coast of Somalia *U.S. Navy via Getty Images*

malia as problems arise. Some 3,400 African Union troops are still in Mogadishu, but no one knows how effective they will be without Ethiopian support. Will they be targeted by the Islamists in the hopes of driving them out? Will they be reinforced, as the AU has promised for so long? Will the shaky Somali government — the 14th attempt in recent years, whose composition was heavily influenced by Ethiopia and accepted with relief by the AU, EU and US — survive long enough to combine with the less militant Islamists? Will the hardliners triumph quickly, as they did two years ago? Or will the lack of a clear winner lead to endless war in the space left by Ethiopia's departure?

Despite its ill-considered invasion, Ethiopia has legitimate interests and fears regarding Somalia. They have had to repel several past invasions, though in 2006 they blundered by marching to Mogadishu in response to empty Islamist threats of another invasion. They knew that the Islamists 'army' was nothing more than a small, untrained militia and some machine guns mounted on pickups. But the distant threat remains: extremists still promise that one day Somalia will reclaim — in their words — the Ogaden from Ethiopia.

Discontent in Ethiopia is more visible and better reported than alleged agitation within Eritrea. Take the case of music superstar Teddy Afro, who was sentenced to six years in jail for a hit-and-run accident which left a man dead. The case received extensive local coverage. Columnists pointed out that the content of Teddy's reggae-style music was often sharply critical of the Meles regime and was regularly banned from the radio. Could it be that Teddy was convicted on trumped up charges because he offended the regime?


More ominous is the case of a leading opposition figure, Birtukan Mideksa, who was among the 38 senior opposition leaders released in 2007 after 18 months in prison along with the entire opposition leadership that had contested the 2005 elections. At the time of their release, a deal was struck that allowed Meles to claim that the political prisoners had admitted wrongdoing but had asked for a

pardon which Meles granted. Birtukan, a young, impressive woman won public sympathy by refusing to capitulate to the Meles government despite having an infant daughter at home.

Since her release she has insisted, with good evidence, that their release was the outcome of a political deal, infuriating Meles, who insists that it was through a formal judicial process. In December she was rearrested and her suspended life sentence reimposed. Both the Teddy Afro case and the Birtukan incident — as well as the reports of continuing human rights abuses in the Ogaden and perhaps also in Oromia — are evidence that the political climate in Ethiopia remains tense.

Obama's choices

For the new Obama administration, the Horn of Africa will be overshadowed by more pressing foreign policy issues including Israel/Palestine, Iraq, Iran and relations with Russia and China. The huge demands on Obama's time and his limited personal familiarity with the region suggest that he will rely on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her team to devise a new US policy for the Horn of Africa following broad policy guidance from the White House but with scope for her own initiatives. The U.S. is likely to seek a lower profile in Somalia to allow time for Somali anger at American support for Ethiopia to fade.

As for Ethiopia, the Obama policy may include increased pressure on the regime to allow greater press freedom and other rights. And perhaps Obama/Clinton will nudge Ethiopia toward ending its stonewalling on border demarcation with Eritrea. To have any chance of success, a new policy on Ethiopia/Eritrea would have to be accompanied by an effort to improve U.S. relations with Eritrea, which are now frozen in bitterness. If the U.S. is seen as pressuring Ethiopia on the border demarcation, Isaias might find it hard to remain as hostile and unyielding as he has been. Whatever Obama's goals, it will still be up to the State Department to develop and implement a new strategy for the Horn that recognizes the failure of U.S. policy there for at least the past decade. 

Eritrea news



Wars & Politics

An Eritrean joke and a sad reality

God is surveying the world one day, checking out his handiwork: the mountains, valleys, seas and all his glorious creations. Suddenly God stops and exclaims: "Why is Eritrea so green? I specifically made that country dry and yellow!" The angel Gabriel leans over and whispers: "My Lord, those are army uniforms."

Gabriel got it right. The World Bank estimates that mandatory national service keeps at least 320,000 Eritreans in the army, out of a population of 4.7 million. Thus one of Africa's smallest nations boasts the largest army in sub-Saharan Africa. Arch-foe Ethiopia, with a population of nearly 77 million, has only 138,000 troops under arms.

Many young Eritreans are frustrated with having to spend years doing national service and only making around \$20 per month. A proclamation that followed Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1991 requires that all Eritreans over 18 and under 40 put in 12 to 18 months of national service. But the term of service is frequently extended indefinitely. Each year up to 25,000 Eritreans leave the country illegally, most crossing into Sudan and Ethiopia to make their way to Europe or the Middle East. For those who decide to leave rather than serve, the risks and costs are high. They must pay middlemen several thousand U.S. dollars to lead them to Sudan. If caught, the would-be migrant will spend months in jail and be interrogated for days for information about the middlemen. Even if they succeed in leaving, illegal immigrants' families can be fined up to 50,000 nakfa, about \$3,300, an enormous sum in a nation where the average per-capita income is \$200.

President Isaias Afwerki told Reuters in an interview

in mid-May that U.S. and British intelligence officials were luring away Eritrea's youth. "Hundreds of young have been misled that there is heaven outside. It's an orchestrated attempt to deplete this nation of its young," he said. But maybe it is the press gangs, eager to sweep up recruits into the military, that the kids are fleeing. Military police in distinctive sandy-colored uniforms and carrying yellow sticks patrol the streets of Asmara searching for Eritreans dodging military service. Young Eritreans do not venture outside their homes without an identity card and movement papers, which list biographical facts and, crucially, their national service status.

The old war: Ethiopia

Eritrea claims it needs its large army because it has problems with its neighbors. Indeed they do. Its conflict with Ethiopia continues. In July The United Nations withdrew its peacekeeping troops from the demilitarized zone along the border between the two countries. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon warned that war could erupt at any moment. That was nearly six months ago and while alarm bells have sounded several times and excited news reports had Eritrea and Ethiopia back shooting at each other, the area remains calm, albeit, heavily fortified.

The Ethiopians are tied down in Somalia and, not eager for "another stupid war" as Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles says. Still the Eritreans feel they have to maintain a show of force on the border and continue to demand that Ethiopia abide by the rulings of the International Border Commission that called for the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from dessert territory now considered belonging to Eritrea. Never take your eye off this conflict. Unless, of course, it is to look at one of Eritrea's other conflicts.

The new war: Djibouti:

Not content with a single senseless border conflict over a few square miles of scrub dessert, Asmara has now started another senseless border conflict over another parcel of scrub dessert. This war is with Djibouti, a country that shares a 110-kilometer border to the southeast of Eritrea. Since Eritrea and Djibouti, formerly French Somaliland, both became independent countries, they have disagreed on where precisely their border was. They blame the problem on the colonial powers, of course. The border was drawn — and then redrawn and then drawn again — in the early 20th century by France and Italy. But the line is still not clear. Djibouti and Eritrea nearly went to war in April 1996 when Djibouti officials claimed that Eritrea shelled Ras Doumeirah, a border village that is home to Afar people. Eritrea may have muddied the waters by publishing a map that included Ras Doumeirah in Eritrea. The facts are not altogether clear. But by May 1996, Eritrea pulled back and Djibouti was mollified.



EYEBALL TO EYEBALL: Eritrean soldiers at the border with Djibouti

order to get sand for a road. But, says Djibouti, the Eritreans did more than dig up some sand. On 4 April, Eritrean troops moved seven kilometers into Djibouti territory, seizing Ras Doumeirah. On April 16 Djibouti reported that Eritrea set up fortifications and dug trenches on both sides of the Djiboutian border near Ras Doumeirah. Djibouti replied by repositioned its forces within close range of the Eritrean army, virtually occupying the same hill near the settlement.

Cooler heads, including diplomats from Qatar and Yemen, went to work trying to avoid a war. There

was a lot of talk, but nothing was resolved. On May 5, Djibouti complained to the U.N. Security Council about Eritrean aggression against its sovereignty. Both sides continued to build up their forces. It was only a matter of time before fighting would erupt.

On June 10th, after two months of tense face-off near Ras Doumeirah, the two sides went at each other. The clash was triggered when some 30 Eritrean soldiers made a dash to desert across the border into Djibouti. This was not an uncommon occurrence. Eritrean soldiers opened fire to stop the defection and the forces from Djibouti returned fire. Firefights continued for about two weeks. Perhaps 30 or 40 soldiers were killed, but large-scale engagements did not take place. The French re-enforced its garrison in Djibouti and dispatched some ships to the area making it clear to Asmara that they would come to Djibouti's defense under an old mutual security agreement. A ceasefire was brokered and a U.N. peace-making team was dispatched.

But trouble erupted once again earlier this year when, according to one version of events, Eritrea requested to cross the border in

So why did Eritrea start squabbling with little Djibouti? As always, Ethiopia was at the root of the problem. Ethiopia, now landlocked because Eritrea closed its ports to the Ethiopians, has become reliant on the ports in Djibouti. Relations between Djibouti and Addis have become close. Eritrea would like to disrupt that alliance. Also in 2002 the Americans picked Djibouti over Eritrea to house the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) of the United States Central Command. Asmara had spent more than a half million dollars lobbying to secure the base. Asmara was not pleased, especially when the base was used to support Ethiopia-allied forces in Somalia. In October the border problem was debated in the U.N. Security Council where Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh said, "The last thing the Horn of Africa needs is another conflict." The two sides are no longer fighting, but nothing has been really settled.

Arms embargo

It was bound to happen: the American government finally imposed a strict arms embargo on Eritrea. The embargo is the direct result of a State Depart-

ment determination made in May that Eritrea was not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts. A statute makes an arms embargo mandatory after such a finding. The embargo became effective on October 1, 2008.

In August of 2007, the State Department threatened to put Eritrea on the list of state sponsors of terrorism on the basis of a U.N. report that found that "huge quantities of arms" have been provided, "by and through Eritrea," to Al-Qaeda linked groups in Somalia. These arms included "an unknown number of surface-to-air missiles, suicide belts, and explosives with timers and detonators." The State Department never followed through on its threat which would have had complicated and difficult ramifications, but instead proceeded with an arms embargo effort. Still the embargo is largely symbolic. In 2007, there were, no U.S. military sales to Eritrea. Nor were there any direct commercial sales of arms from the United States to Eritrea according to the State Department.

Canadian slight

Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh wanted to go to Canada to speak to the sizable Eritrean community there. Sounds reasonable enough. Canada and Eritrean have diplomatic relations dating back to 1993 when Eritrean became independent. But when Osman applied for a visa, the Canadian embassy in Nairobi sent him a letter: "You were a member of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front between 1979 and 1991. The EPLF was a group that engaged in the subversion of a government by force. Canadian Federal Court jurisprudence confirms that membership in a group that attempts to subvert even a despotic government is sufficient to render inadmissibility. As such, you are inadmissible to Canada pursuant to section A34(1)(f) of the Act. I am therefore refusing your application".

The Eritreans were horrified. They blasted back with their own letter: "How can one explain this gross and provocative folly? Is it sheer ignorance by a junior Government official or a deliberate desire by the Government of Canada to desecrate Eritrea's legitimate struggle against colonial occupation that exacted the lives of more than 60,000 of our best

sons and daughters? Why did Canada establish, in the first place, diplomatic ties with Eritrea after its independence in 1993 and why has it maintained it until today? Why did it receive the accreditation of Eritrea's resident Ambassadors in the past years?" The current Eritrean ambassador to Canada, Ahferom Berhane, declared that he is puzzled and appalled at the Canadian decision. He told the Toronto Sun that foreign minister Salah meets all the qualifications to be accepted, and to call the EPLF a "subversive organization" makes no sense, since it comprises the core of the Eritrean government today. "We have always had good relations with Canada," he said. "Canadian businesses operate in Eritrea. Your soldiers were peacekeepers after the 1998 border war with Ethiopia. In the war of liberation, my wife was a fighter. I was a fighter. We were all EPLF. Why is Canada doing this?" The Canadian Foreign Ministry said that the matter was in the hands of the Immigration department and the good folks at Immigration were not talking.

Business & Economy

Golden update

You have to give Canada's Nevsun Resources Ltd credit for persistence. They have been trying to begin mining operations in Eritrea since they acquired about 225 square kilometers of land at Bisha about 150 km west of Asmara in 1998. The Border War between Ethiopia and Eritrea interrupted work on the project for several years, as did several squabbles with the government. But all that seems to be settled and in January 2008, Nevsun received a new license to work. The idea is to develop an open pit mine that could produce gold, copper and zinc. Work is well on its way. According to a report by the company, since early 2008 critical items with long lead time have been ordered, construction camp facilities expanded, local contractors hired, and local infrastructure is being built. Plant site earthworks are underway and should be commissioned by early 2010.

And the moneymen have shown up to take a look. During the last week of August a short-listed group of bankers visited the country to carry out due dili-



THERE MAY BE GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS: Site of the Canadian mining operations at Bisha, about 150 km from Asmara *Nevsun Resources Ltd.*

gence in preparation for project finance. The bankers' independent engineer, Micon International, has provided a positive report to Endeavour Financial, the project finance advisor to Bisha. Over a few days the banking group toured the Bisha site, Massawa port facilities and the capital city of Asmara and also met with a number of senior Government officials, who clearly demonstrated their support for the project. Nevsun says the company is "very encouraged by the consistent and clear message from Government in its support for the industry. We are very fortunate to have such a robust project to launch the mining industry in the country." They said that before, but now this major project does seem to be about to get the gold — and zinc and copper — from Eritrean hills.

Bounty by the sea

Near the town of Hirgigo on the Red Sea shore, a vast numbers of newly planted mangrove trees have given fish, crabs and oysters vital shelter to feed and breed in an area where there were previously only arid mud flats, reports Reuters. Led by U.S. scientist and humanitarian Gordon Sato, a project involving mangrove trees has transformed the landscape and the lives of the villagers. Close to a million mangroves now form a four-mile swathe spreading out from Hirgigo. They provide fodder for livestock so villagers no longer have to trek into distant highlands to feed their sheep and goats.

Now 80, Sato first came to Eritrea in the 1980s, when war and hunger were devastating its people. He and his team saw that the mangroves grew in areas where rainwater was washing into the sea. The rain was providing nitrogen, phosphorous and iron — elements lacking in seawater. By burying the seeds with a piece of iron and a punctured bag of fertilizer rich in nitrogen and phosphorous, the

mangroves flourished. Desertification was reversed, and the life of the community was transformed. "With simple experiments we are able to produce food and money for poor people where it did not seem possible. We can convert barren mud flats into mangrove forests and use these to provide the bulk of food for livestock," Sato said.

"This is a low-tech solution to hunger and poverty. In these times of food price rises and global warming, it is just what the world needs," project manager Ammanuel Yemane, of Eritrea's Fisheries Ministry told Reuters. "Ours is a small and little-known country, but we have a unique project here that can serve as a model to the world." The majority of workers on the project, planting trees and collecting the leaves, are women, who draw a monthly salary of 600 nakfa, about \$40, for the first time in their lives.

Looking elsewhere for help

In recent years, Eritrea has found itself increasingly isolated from the West and even from the rest of Africa. To fill the void, Asmara has turned to Iran and China in hopes of finding enhanced trade and cooperation on the world stage. Trade with these new partners remains small and diplomatic ties do not represent much more than courtesy. This summer a high-level delegations from China and Iran visited the Eritrean capital Asmara. The goal, as always, was "to deepen bilateral ties." Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki has put great effort into cultivating alternative trade partners after he severed ties with Western countries. A Chinese delegation came through Asmara and there was talk — but no contract — of Chinese investment in plans to develop cotton production in Eritrea. Right now the balance of trade between China and Eritrea is solidly in China's favor with Eritrea importing nearly \$37 million of Chinese goods, while only sending less than \$1 million dollars worth of goods to China.

The governments of Iran and Eritrea share a suspicion and dislike of the U.S. President Isaias held talks with senior Iranian government officials during a recent visit to Tehran. But not much came of the trip or of a return visit by Iranian officials to Eritrea this summer. Not even the goal of exchang-



JUST HOW ANNOYING IS THE U.S.? Eritrea's Isaias and Iran's Ahmadinejad discuss policy

ing ambassadors has been reached. It's not for lack of trying on Isaias' part. He has called the U.S. his country's "arch-enemy": and declared support for Iran's controversial nuclear program. President Isaias hoped to get a privileged access to Iran's oil exports, but Eritrea is still importing most of its oil from pro-Western states in the Arabian Peninsula. Even more annoying, the trade volume between Iran and Ethiopia, Eritrea's sworn enemy, is much greater than it is with Asmara.

Drought in Eritrea, too

The government warned Eritreans to prepare for a poor harvest caused by drought. In an obliquely worded statement from the Ministry of Information, the government said "collaborative efforts of the people and members of the Defense Force are underway so as to enable efficient utilization of the crops harvested in 2008 without any unnecessary waste. The objective of this important endeavor is to ensure equitable distribution of the crop output among all sections of the society. Sharing resources amongst one another both in times of trouble and plenty is one of the unique Eritrean values."


The statement said the government realizes the importance of "achieving food security and thereby guaranteeing national security. Because, if a given people are unable to achieve food security and avoid dependence on others, they could never have political or economic freedom. That is why food security is directly related to national security. Realizing this fact early on, the people and Government of Eritrea avoided the culture of dependence and handouts and chose to pursue a development strategy based on self-reliance." Translation: any food shortages are because of poor rains and the country's restrictions on the amount of foreign food assistance it accepts.

New markets opened

In a good break for Eritrea, the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture has lifted its ban imposed on the import of sheep, cows and camels from Eritrea. The livestock from Eritrea will be subjected to strict export conditions and procedures of the quarantine in the port of Kahtalia in Eritrea. The animals will be held for 30 days before they are exported to Saudi Arabia to make sure they are free of diseases such as Rift Valley fever which had been a big problem for Eritrea in exporting live stock. The Ministry of Agriculture said the period of quarantine in Kahtalia before the export of the animals will be reduced from 30 days to 10 days during the Haj season of this year.

Joining the whale hunting club

Eritrea has seldom been thought of as a traditional whale hunting nation. But last year Eritrea, along with Tanzania and the Republic of the Congo, joined the 82-member International Whaling Commission. The IWC, under the leadership of Western countries like Britain, the U.S. and Australia, has banned most whale hunting. But ardent whale consuming nations like Japan and Norway have worked to recruit other nations to join the IWC in hopes of reviving whaling. As a result, occasionally words like "vote buying" are bandied about at meetings. Said John Frizell of Greenpeace International, "We do not know Eritrea's views on whales, or why a small, desperately poor country, where 80 per cent of the population is involved in farming and herding, would want to join the IWC, although it is not hard to guess."

And speaking of fishing, Eritrea and Yemen recently have been arguing over fishing rights in the Red Sea. Early this year Eritrean authorities seized several Yemani fishing boats in what Yeman claims was Yemani territorial waters. The boats were confiscated and the fishermen returned home. "The recent detention is an unjustified operation and totally unacceptable," said a Yemani official. Two years ago Eritrea and Yeman signed an agreement of fishing rights, but that seems to have been mostly forgotten. 

The Sports Pages

All that glitters is gold

Ethiopian runners win historic double victories in Beijing

By Barry Hillenbrand

THEY STOOD UNDER A SKY threatening rain waiting for the plane to arrive. It was six hours late. Not a surprise. No problem. When the plane finally did land, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi stepped forward and welcomed home Ethiopia's Olympic team from Beijing. Laden with seven medals, the athletes

clearly outshone the Prime Minister. Piling into awaiting open-topped limos, the athletes headed for the Addis' 30,000 seat National Stadium passing down streets packed with fans waving flags, shouting, and jumping up and down for a glimpse.

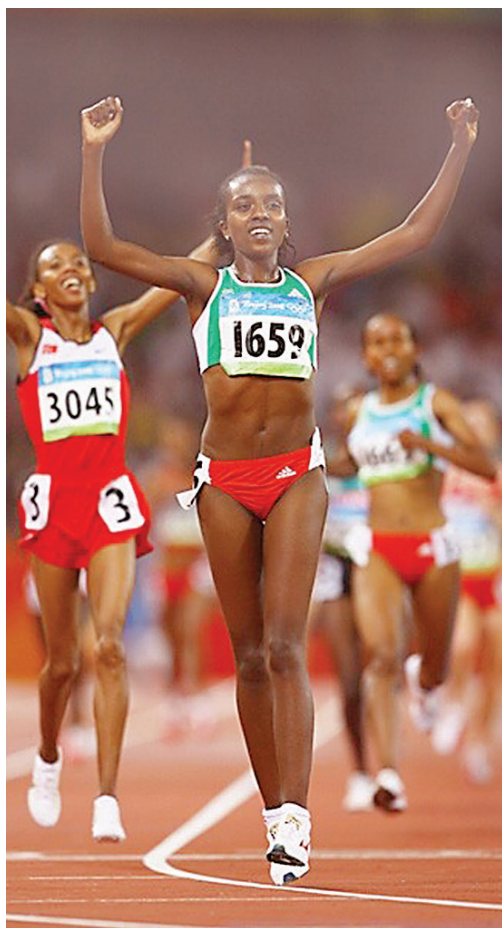
Ethiopia's Olympic campaign, watched by millions of enthralled fans on TVs across the nation, was declared a national success. Streets were renamed for the new heroes: now Kenenisa Bekele who won double golds in the 5,000m and 10,000m can drive the Toyota Corolla 2000 given to him by PM Meles down newly renamed Kenenisa Avenue. The women were not outdone. Tirunesh Dibaba likewise won gold in both the 5000m and 10,000m. Tirunesh already has a hospital named after her. So at the tender age of 23, Tirunesh, known as the Baby Faced Destroyer, was promoted to the rank of Chief

Superintendent in the prison police ranks in a formal ceremony where her stars glittered almost as brightly as her medals.

The Ethiopians were pleased with their performances in Beijing. Their haul placed them a credible 18th in the

medal ranks and that certainly was an improvement over the 2004 Games in Athens when Ethiopia finished a disappointing 28th in the standings. Yet as good as the results were — and who could forget the dramatic finishing kicks by Bekele and Dibaba? — the Ethiopians did finish behind their archrival Kenya in the medal count. The Kenyans won five gold, five silver and four bronze, finishing 15th in the medal standings.

But forget about the Kenyans. There were many moments to savor from Beijing. The double golds in the 10,000m and 5,000m marked the first time the double has been achieved since the 1980 Games. Also there were records matched and broken. In the opening running event of the Beijing Games, Tirunesh Dibaba ran the second-fastest women's 10,000 meters ever. With a punishing 60-second final lap, Dibaba crossed the line in 29 minutes 54.66 seconds, a time surpassed only by the 29:31.78 run by Wang Junxia of China in 1993, in an era when



ANOTHER GOLD:: Tirunesh adds a victory in the 5,000m to her 10,000m win



CALL ME SUPER: Tirunesh Dibaba gets her Chief Superintendent stars

drug testing was a bit less sophisticated. On the bell lap of the 25-lap race, Dibaba blew past silver medalist Elvan Abeylegesse, a native of Ethiopia who now competes for Turkey. The two ran alone for the final five laps. It was a wondrous sight.

Kenenisa Bekele joins an elite group of runners — Hannes Kolehmainen, Emil Zatopek, Vladimir Kuts, Lasse Viren and Miruts Yifter — as the only men to win the 5,000 and 10,000 double at the Olympic Games. In the 10,000 meters, Bekele ran a masterful tactical performance as he dictated the pace from the front for much of the race before unleashing that killer kick finish to destroy the opposition and set an Olympic record of 12:57:82.

In the marathon, the excitement for Ethiopia was a desperate battle for third place. Tsegay Kebede pushed hard in the last lap of the race as the crowd in the Bird's Nest Stadium cheered wildly. In the final 200 meters he caught exhausted Deriba Merga for a bronze medal. "Finally I overtook Deriba Merga by several meters, I felt very happy, because I didn't expect that," Kebede said excitedly. Conspicuous by his absence was marathon world record-holder Haile Gebrselassie who pulled out of the race over fears that

Beijing's air pollution would damage his health. "I'm surprised [at the conditions for the marathon]. What do you expect from me? I was here in February, I didn't see any blue sky," Gebrselassie said after the race which was run in sunshine. "Since I came here everything is perfect. They should have told us," he said with a laugh. Asked if he was now sorry he did not run in the marathon, he chuckled again and said: "Don't push me. Yes."

Gebrselassie ran in the men's 10,000, an event in which he has twice won an Olympic gold medal. He finished in sixth place. "Getting sixth in 10,000, it was not bad," he said. But not as good as winning the marathon. "The only problem I had yesterday was just the last 250 meters. I have no more sprint. My training is mostly for a marathon." As if to prove his point Gebrselassie delivered fascinating and thrilling performances at the Berlin Marathon in September in front of an enthusiastic crowd of at least one million people. He broke his own world record by 27 seconds and with 2:03:59 achieved his goal of becoming the first runner to break 2:04 for a marathon.

Meanwhile, in other sports news . . .

Yes, Ethiopians do care about other sports aside from running. Like soccer. But the news there is not good. In February FIFA, the international soccer federation that organizes the World Cup and other international competitions, suspended Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF) from competition after the Ethiopia Federation appointed a new president and administrative staff. FIFA continued to recognize the former president, Dr Ashebir Woldegiorgis, and called his dismissal "illegal and unjust." FIFA set out a "Roadmap" for restoring Ethiopia to good grace.

But EFF failed to meet FIFA's demands. In September, FIFA postponed Ethiopia's World Cup qualifying match against Morocco. More talks were scheduled, but in November these talks collapsed. Sounding a bit like diplomats dealing with the Middle East, FIFA announced that the Roadmap was abandoned and that Ethiopia was expelled from its qualifying group. The results of the four games Ethiopia had already played in World Cup qualification rounds were expunged, effectively eliminating any chance of Ethiopia's qualifying for the 2010 World Cup or playing in the African Nations Cup. In December the new and FIFA-unacceptable president of the Ethiopia Federation resigned, but the gesture came too late. It's a gloomy time for soccer in Ethiopia. 



KENENISA BEKELE: Takes a victory lap after his historic double win in the 5,000 and 10,000

NEWS FROM PEACE CORPS/ETHIOPIA

Of fleas, frustrations, and a growing sense of competence

A PCV reflects on her first year of service

By Christen Smith (Debre Markos 2007—)

SEEING US NOW, it wouldn't take much to convince you that we have been living in Ethiopia for a year. You returned Volunteers would especially recognize the telltale signs: the two-handed handshakes, the compulsive bowing, the over-prevalence of "program," "possible," and "fine" in our vocabularies. For us standing here at the mid-point of our service, it is remarkable that only one year ago these things were not a part of our lives. Only one year ago we were still bathing daily, still capable of confining our greetings to a mere five seconds, still ignorant of the program in all its many incarnations. Only a year ago, we still considered fleas to be an affliction mainly of animals.

Our first year as Peace Corps Volunteers in Ethiopia has changed us profoundly, sometimes more than even we ourselves realize. I feel it now as, like many from our group, I am spending a few weeks at home for the holidays, and it requires fighting against every ingrained impulse in order to drop a piece of toilet paper in the toilet.

Over the course of this past year, both as Volunteers and as people, we have grown in many ways — and not just those involving waste disposal. Our journey to this point has been far from easy, however.

In this first year of Peace Corps' return to Ethiopia, we were faced with finding a job, defining our role, essentially shaping a larger Peace Corps Health Program around our observations and experiences on the ground. The complexity of our program goal — to strengthen the country's HIV&AIDS response in broad areas of prevention, care and support, and aid to orphans and vulnerable children — lends a fluidity to our day-to-day work that has proven challenging, sometimes frustrating. My work this year has taken me to trainings, meetings, hospitals, schools, track meets, gynecologists' offices, cultural dance displays, chicken farms, construction sites, and even a reception for a visiting U.S. Congressman. It has put me in contact with government administrators, clinicians, small business experts, journalists, tourism officials, former commercial sex workers, people living with HIV, Orthodox priests, Rastafarians, German architects, Swedish agricultural researchers, and philanthropic American fashion designers. My typical Ethiopian workday — if there is such a thing — seems to involve more discussion than doing and more tea and coffee consumption than tangible action.

For many of us, it has taken the greater part of a year just to find meaningful ways to help our com-

munities. My first four months in Debre Markos were spent knocking on doors. Each day, I would pick a new government office or NGO from the signs I read wandering through town, and I would show up hoping to meet with someone, introduce myself and Peace Corps, and talk about HIV-related projects. I felt like a door-to-door salesman, trying to persuade people that I was offering something they could use.

Most people were less than convinced — but would love some money if I could get any from my organization. In a few cases, though, these meetings produced real leads for potential work. It was in this way, for example, that I found my current projects at the local university, working with students and staff to mainstream HIV issues into university policy and programs.

Opportunities also arose in the most unexpected of places. In my case, opportunity literally knocked at my door one morning, in the form of a biology teacher at a local primary school, who remembered well his Peace Corps teacher from the mid-'60s and wanted to meet the new Volunteers in his town. With his help, and after nearly nine months of friendly visits to his school, I have organized a workshop for 57 teachers on creative teaching methods and HIV&AIDS basic education.

Being part of a new program, we have, to a large extent, been going forward into the unknown, proceeding by trial and error. There were many bumps along the way, many false starts and dead ends that discouraged us. Throughout it all, though, we moved forward, even when the progress were not immediately visible. At the time, those

four months of PCV canvassing throughout Debre Markos seemed like nothing but a series of failed attempts to find a job for myself. Now, though, I recognize the profit I reaped from those efforts. When a problem arises now in one of my projects, I have the satisfaction of being able to whip out my cell phone, page through to one of my local contacts, and say (perhaps with a cocky little wink for effect), "I think I know someone who can help . . ."

We are certainly not the same group that stepped wide-eyed and apprehensive into our sites one year ago. As Volunteers, we are beginning to sense those glimmers of the competence that we were assured would come to us. We feel savvy in our work these days. We know which local organizations are doing what, where we can go for resources, who we can — and cannot — count on to get things done. We can now adeptly navigate the necessary processes to procure those all-important purple stamps.

We have established ourselves in our communities. Sizeable portions of local residents know us by name — and a scattered few might even understand what we're doing here. Children in the streets of Debre Markos are catching on to the drill: I ignore, "YouYouYou," "FarenjiFarenjiFarenji," and "MoneyMoneyMoney," but will faithfully and cheerfully respond to, "Hello," "Hi," "Good morning/afternoon," and any of their assorted variations on the theme of, "Kristi . . ." Often I hear them correcting their yet unenlightened friends.

We have spent this year learning, from each other, from the Ethiopians around us, and from our own triumphs and mistakes. We have gained greater understanding for the country and culture of



PROGRAM, PROGRAM, PROGRAM: Author Smith with Captain Condom at an HIV/AIDS event

Ethiopia. We have become more skilled in handling its particular complexities and, at the same time, have become more deeply appreciative of the things that make it special. In the process, we have learned more about ourselves, our priorities and values, our strengths and weaknesses, our aims for the future.

There is also a very literal sense in which we are not the same group from a year ago. Of the 42 of us that swore in together last December, we have been reduced to just 29. The circumstances causing the departures are varied. Two main themes emerge: medical conditions triggered by challenging environmental (or road) conditions, and frustrations with unsatisfying work situations. Each early exit is sad for those of us who remain. Ultimately, though, we recognize that in some cases, a year here has given the clarity, confidence, and assurance to pursue new paths — paths as diverse as nursing school, non-profit work, urban planning, and flight attending.

Meanwhile, in December we have welcomed to Ethiopia a group of 40 new trainees, who, after their ten weeks of training in Ambo, will join our efforts in strengthening HIV&AIDS response. I had the opportunity to meet them on the day they stepped off the bus into their training site, full of questions, full of enthusiasm, and laden down with their 80 pounds of luggage each. As I talked with them, fielding ques-

tions about everything from language (Wait, I know Amharic?), to culture (Wait, I know Ethiopia?), to my job (Wait, I have a job?), I realized just what a difference a year had made.

As we current Volunteers head into our second year of service, we do not expect fewer challenges, but we do expect to be better equipped to meet them. We trust that the knowledge, skills, and perspective we have gained thus far will help us to make a positive impact in our final year in Ethiopia. And as the new trainees prepare

for their service, we hope that their experience will be one that has been strengthened and refined by our struggles. We are confident that our experiences this past year have paved the way for success in the final stages of our journey, as well as for a successful Peace Corps/ Ethiopia program stretching into the future. 🇪🇹🇪🇹

Editor's note: The HERALD is eager to receive contributions from Peace Corps Volunteers now serving in Ethiopia. The style for these articles need not be formal, more like emails to old friends who, in a sense, we all are. We are especially interested in hearing from the new group of PVCs who arrived in December and are training in Ambo. So please send your suggestions and ideas — or finished pieces — to the HERALD editor at BarryHillenbrand@mac.com



A JOYFUL NOISE Celebrating a successful year



THANKSGIVING DORO: Two PCVs now in search of cranberries and punkin pie

SECOND TIME AROUND

Travel, training, and a fair bit of old time idealism

A former E&E PCV joins Peace Corps (again!) and finds that teaching is still a joy, but what's with all this maddening bureaucracy?

By Gayle Washburn (Gondar 1963–65; Chongqing, China 2008–)

IN 1963, AT AGE 22, I joined the Peace Corps. I was young and idealistic. I wanted to help save the world. And I wanted to travel, experience some adventure and meet interesting people. It was my good fortune to join the Ethiopia II project where, indeed, I met many very interesting, bright and

idealistic trainees at UCLA. Many have done amazing things in the last forty years and many remained life-long, supportive friends.

On the whole my experience in Gondar was positive. I learned lessons there that influenced my whole life. I worked very hard, teaching 400 students a day at Haile Selassie I Secondary School. I learned to be independent, to stay healthy and to have an admiration for a people and a culture that was not my own. I was able to travel to many parts of Ethiopia and visit other parts of east Africa.

After Peace Corps my life followed the path of many RPCVs: I went to graduate school, got married, raised a child, divorced, taught in a public school system. Through it all that I kept some of my original idealism alive. After forty years of teaching, I retired. It was a goal I had looked forward to for many years, but when it came I realized that teaching was the focus of my life and that I missed it. In retirement I discovered that I had little to look forward to. I was proud of my accomplishments: My son, Ethan, who with his wife Sara served as PCVs in Samoa, turned into a fine, community-oriented young man. Moreover, I had done a good job in



GAYLE IN ETHIOPIA 1963: Adventure, travel and 400 students a day

teaching all those years. But I wanted more. I wanted to travel and was eager for another adventure. So in 2007 when I noticed that Peace Corps was advertising for retirees, I sent in my second Peace Corps application. Six months later I was invited to join a project in China.

ON THE FIRST OF JULY 2008, I arrived in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, for two months of Peace Corps training. I was part of a group of 36 people called China 14. Peace Corps has been in China since the early 1990s. All the Volunteers teach English at colleges and universities in four of the poorer western provinces. China does not need Peace Corps in the traditional sense that many of us think of the Peace Corps organization, but we are supplying “trained men and women” as the original directive dictated. All Volunteers are in large cities here.

As a second-go-rounder I found myself, fairly or not, making lots of comparisons between then and now. I compare the training here in China with what we underwent at UCLA in 1963. I keep comparing the Peace Corps organization itself now versus when what it was when it was a young, vital and dynamic organizing in the '60s. And finally, of

course, I compare how I am handling the whole experience at 67, versus when I was just 22.

Peace Corps service may be easier for a repeater, especially for a senior who is assigned to a major city. Today most of us have Internet connections or phone service, or both. We have regular electricity and lot better plumbing than we had in our days in Ethiopia. I can remember only a few working telephones in Gondar and I never used one. Mail took weeks to arrive either way, and assistance from the Peace Corps office was three days away. We had to make do and be independent. On the other hand things that bothered me when I was 22 simply do not now. I know the predictable pattern of emotional distress, of disenchantment, of homesickness and I know it will pass shortly. I also know that the entire two years will go by very quickly. When I was younger, two years seemed to be eons long.

Some problems that are particular to senior applicants are dealt with in the initial application. A thorough physical exam is required, and for China a second physical is ordered up. The application process takes a lot of time and effort. And older Volunteers are usually sent to urban areas where there are proper medical facilities. But if one needs routine, but costly, medicines, Peace Corps Medical Officers may not be able to make them available



GAYLE IN CHINA IN 2008: Achy joints, bad mattresses, eager students and the joys of Hotel English

because of cuts to the Peace Corps budget. Achy joints, I discovered, will still ache and the need for a good mattress will remain an unmet need unless the Volunteer becomes creative.

TRAINING IS VERY DIFFERENT from what it was in the 1960s. Our Ethiopia II group started off with about 175 Trainees. And the Ethy Is and IIIs were almost twice that number! People here do not believe our groups were that large. An average Peace Corps Training group now is less than 20 in many projects. Our China 14 group of 36 was divided into two groups, 20 and 16 and sent to two different universities to train.

One problem older Volunteers face is a shortage of peers. There are still a lot of very young people in Peace Corps, and difference in age and interests make it hard to make new friends and form a support group. Additionally, Peace Corps China does a lot of separating and isolating of trainees into language learning groups that made it doubly difficult to get to know other trainees well.


I do have some criticism of the training process here in China, and I find that some of the changes in Peace Corps organization itself are disappointing. Training in Chengdu emphasized language first. Second in importance was a long list of rules. There was no interest in Peace Corps' original idea of person-to-person contact. And there was very little teaching of culture or history.

I did poorly during Mandarin lessons. The Chinese language teachers believed that older learners could not do well and I proved them right. But I have been failing language classes all my life, so maybe age was not the key factor. I might have benefited from an oral-aural approach to Mandarin, but that is not the way the language is taught here. I was surprised that for all the years Peace Corps has been teaching all kinds of languages they did not have access to proper language laboratory tapes or downloads for our MP3 players or lap tops. Perhaps this too has to do with financial constraints.

I also found myself disappointed with the Peace Corps' obsessive concern that some of us might break some rules. Of course we live in a post 9/11 era and we are in China, but still the rules are carried to an extreme. Virtually everything we did in Ethiopia in the '60s would have had us sent home by Peace Corps China rules. In China, we are told never leave site without notifying administrators. Observe a 11 PM curfew. Never drive a car and never ride a motorcycle. There are limitations to riding all sorts of motorized vehicles. Pets (except goldfish) are forbidden. Never ride a bicycle without a proper helmet.

In the early years only an adventurous person would have joined the Peace Corps. Now any adventurous person might not join if he or she knew the rigidity of the many rules. I suspect that Peace Corps has had to let certain aspects of its character go in exchange for security against PCV injuries, medical costs and law suits. A part of me understands the bureaucracy of a governmental organization but the romance and idealism are gone. And that saddens me.

There are, however, some wonderful aspects of this second adventure. I am teaching Hotel English and Oral English at a small vocational college in Chongqing City, the largest city in rapidly developing West China. My students are eager, polite, friendly and thrilled to have an experienced native speaker for a teacher. I enjoy my classes, unusual though the course description may be.

I am happy here and I am finding opportunities to be creative in the classroom, something I have always enjoyed. I do have zillions of lesson plans to write (another aspect of the bureaucracy) and they are not really very useful, but having taught in the public school system for many years, I am good at writing lesson plans. I have found my own language tapes and am slowly learning Mandarin. And I am making the person-to-person contacts that represent the old Peace Corps spirit. In two years I will leave here knowing I have left a very positive mark and I am certain I will carry some of what I am starting to love about China home with me. 

ETHIOPIA IN CHINA

Wa't on the Wall

A RPCV discovers that Ethiopia is never very far away, even in China

By LaDena Robichaud Schnapper (Dessie/Awassa 63-65)

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA has witnessed eons of dauntless history. Millions of soldiers, farmers, workers, students and more recently tourists have marveled at its construction, durability and length — over 4,000 miles long! But I do believe, this was the first time ever anyone in its 2,500 year history has had a goursha (hand feeding by another person) of wa't on the Wall.

"Giramaing!" (I'm astonished!) Mesfin exclaimed, as he opened his mouth for my goursha. So too

was I amazed at this remarkable coincidence of people, place and cultures. Here I was, a lover of Ethiopians and their doro wa't, eating with Habashas on the Great Wall of China.

When I went to China to visit Simeon, my youngest son, a businessman in Shanghai, I was

aware there was only one Ethiopian restaurant in all of China. I knew a pilgrimage to Beijing would be necessary to see not only the Great Wall, but also to eat at The Ras restaurant. After walking the streets of Shanghai three to four hours a day for a month, studying some Mandarin (more complex

than Amharic!) and learning some Tai Ji, I told Simeon I was going to Beijing to see the Great Wall. I was too embarrassed to tell him my primary motive was to check out The Ras, eat some doro wa't and speak a few words of Amharic with Ethiopians. I always delight in seeing Ethiopians express amazement, joy and pride in my knowing a bit of their language and culture. Their pure rich emotional responses never fail to fill me with a primal satisfaction.

So I booked a bed online at the Lotus, a student hostel in the middle of Beijing. Arriving after dark, I secured a taxi. After a 45 minute drive, the driver dropped me off pointing to a dark alley and a street sign I couldn't read. Warily — very warily — with deep breaths to contain my fear, I made my way in the darkness until I spied the Lotus sign and speedily proceeded to knock on the big red door which opened with a smiling Chinese girl voicing a "Hello." Relief!

I deposited my bag in a room shared with two students and then asked the Lotus staff to write The Ras' address in Chinese for a taxi driver. I was not going to waste any time connecting with Ethiopians. Finding The Ras presented a challenge, however. After another 45 minutes of circling many wrong streets, I spotted a store front with green, yellow and red curtains, I told the taxi driver, "Zher." (Here)

Entering The Ras, I immediately felt at home with the soft Ethiopian atmosphere of dim lights, mes-sob (baskets tables), burchuma (three legged stools made out of one piece of wood), a gigantic wall mural of Mao Zedong greeting Haile Selassie in China when he visited in the '70s and multicolored



NO CHOPSTICKS REQUIRED: LaDena Robichaud Schnapper and friends enjoy doro wa't at the Great Wall

talot (umbrellas) hanging upside down from the ceiling. Beautiful Chinese girls, dressed in black silk pajama-like uniforms with a strips of the red, green, yellow colors of the Ethiopian flag, smiled at me. But no Ethiopians!

Tenestaling, I said, to the waitresses. The answer was "Tenestaling, tinish tinish Amarinya." I was the only customer so I placed myself at a messob and read the menu listing many wa'ts. My choice never varies: doro wa't. Ever since my Peace Corps days in Dessie in the '60s, I have been addicted to doro wa't that was prepared so expertly by my cook, Waizero Mametah.

I asked, "Where are the Ethiopians." The waitress answered, "They will come." Well, I certainly hoped so. I don't know what it is, but whenever I see Ethiopians, my heart begins to pound and race with exciting expectation. I come out of myself to speak Amharic transcending my own culture and connect to Ethiopians on a deeper level than I usually do with other cultures — including my own.


Half way through my doro wa't, Waizero Tiruwork, the cook, walked in with Mesfn and Haimonot, the dancers. I could not contain myself and with a mouthful of wa't, I bowed and almost screamed Tenestaling! Surprised, the Ethiopians immediately came over to this ferengi and we began conversing in Amharic. I learned that the Ethiopians had not seen much of Beijing nor spent much time in China. They arrived about eight months prior to the Olympics to staff the restaurant. As I was still the only customer, I suggested instead of their show that night of iskesta (dancing), they make buna for me. I insisted on all three rounds of the coffee ceremony — abol, tona and baraka — to prolong this slice of Ethiopia for myself.

As the night progressed and the mystical power of buna was felt, we became like zemad, family, and an idea came to mind; I thought "why not?" Tomorrow would be election day in America and my candidate's motto was "Yes, we can." So why can't I? I have learned that when I thread my life with Ethiopians, I experience extra measures of joy and meaning. So I asked my new family of Ethiopian

friends to join me on my pilgrimage to the Great Wall. The arrangement: I would provide transport; they, the sinke, the travel food. Right! Not a subtle hint at all!

On November 5, 2008 Tiruwork, Mesfn and Haimonot arrived at 7am at my hostel. I was wearing my Obama t-shirt in anticipation of the election results which were not in yet. The van was ready with driver, two of the Lotus staff Chinese girls who have never been to the Wall and two male guests from Spain. After three hours of driving north through flat, hilly, then mountainous terrain, we arrive at the Jinshanling-Simatai section of the Great Wall, a 5-mile stretch, comprising of thirty guard stations. I chose this segment to hike for its magnificent views, its isolation, its original construction and ruggedness. After five hours of strenuous ups and downs, I stopped with a "Bakka!" I invited our group to sit and eat, offering explanations of the Ethiopian food and the goursha. Plastic container covers were removed revealing, oh yes!, doro wa't, tsom ferfer (ground pea stew) and injera.

Abait! Abait! (Oh my!) I looked out on the stunning Chinese countryside, at the dazzling smiles of joy on my new Ethiopian family, at the inquisitive Chinese and Spanish young people, at the phenomenal Great Wall. I realize I had seized the opportunity and dared create this peak experience for myself. Ethiopians might say, "Kalemenager Dejazmachten yekeral," which, loosely translated, means, "You need to speak up to get what you want." I shall remember that moment and that powerful lesson until the day I die. Truly I was blessed and ever so filled with gratitude for life, for nature, for Ethiopians, for a son who had invited me to China, and for my ability to weave it all together into one glorious extraordinary pinnacle of time.

On our group's successful return to The Ras, we ate more doro wa't and I danced iskesta celebrating Obama's and my own heroic victory. For it is said in China, "One who fails to reach the Great Wall is not regarded as a hero." With a blissful smile, I add, "Ah, but to reach the Great Wall and not enjoy doro wa't would be a double pity." 

Friends

Oklahoma Ge'ezers and associates

The HERALD's good friend and consistent contributor, **Ted Vestal** (Staff 64–66) sends one of his informative emails from Oklahoma where he reports that the Oklahoma Ethiopia Society is, despite its unlikely location, an amazingly active gang of old Ge'ezers. Of course Ted is head Ge'ezer and has an article the December 2008 issue of the Journal of Supreme Court History which provides a colorful account of the luncheon Chief Justice Earl Warren held for Haile Selassie in 1967. There's a great photo of HIM, LBJ, and Warren receiving a snappy salute from a Marine at the White House. There's also mention of Bereket Habte Selassie, the former Attorney General of Ethiopia and author of the Eritrean Constitution that has never been put in force, who had lunch with Warren and Jim Paul at the Supreme Court.

Ted scored a second time in 2008 with an article in the journal Horn of Africa (<http://hornofafrica.newark.rutgers.edu/articles.html>) called "An American's View of the Horn of Africa from World War II to the Present."

Finally, a whole string of E&E RPCVs have contributed to the Encyclopaedia Aethiopia that has completed publication of its Fourth Volume issued by Hamburg University. Among the RPCV authors **LaVerle Berry** (Addis 64–66), **Cynthia Tse Kimberlin** (Adi Ugri, Asmara 62–64), **James McCann** (Buri 73–75), **James Quirin** (Bati 65–67) and, natch, Ted. This definitive 4-volume work that covers Ethiopia from Lucy through 1974.

Lucy in Seattle

Nancy Dean Nowak (Makelle; Asmara 63–65) sent the HERALD a delightful email about her trip to Seattle where she visited her son Tom, her E&E buddy, **Shirley Ellingson** (Asmara 63–65) and Lucy. Reports Nancy: "I went to see the Pacific Science Museum exhibit "Lucy's Legacy — The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia," which for me was spectacular. During our Ethiopia/Eritrea II, 30th reunion in-country in 1995, Lucy winked to us as we strolled by her glass casket in a small, very simple museum

in Addis Ababa. I thought when I visited her again in Seattle she might be similarly simple. Was I ever wrong!

The Lucy exhibit was an extensive, many-splendored view into Ethiopia's geography, history, culture, art, religion, anthropology, archeology, agriculture, and more. Detailed time lines, starting way before Solomon and Sheba, placed major Ethiopian events in the context of significant African and world milestones. The telling of Ethiopia's history ended with 1974, so the scourge of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict and the Derg were not mentioned.

The later part of the exhibit focused on Lucy and her discovery in 1974. Fascinating displays compared monkeys, apes, Lucy and modern homo sapiens. For example, the three ape-like skulls were filled with water to show volume/brain power. Lucy's brain was just slightly "smarter" than her ape ancestors. A demonstration showed that human skulls contain 3 times as much volume as Lucy's.

A major joy was sharing the exhibit with a whole bunch of elementary school kids. Their teachers were busy questioning the kids about what they were seeing. Most kids had no prior knowledge of Ethiopia and were soaking up a very rich view of Africa, of Ethiopia.

We understand that the exhibit has no place to go after it closes in March in Seattle, where attendance, alas, has been disappointingly low.

Once Kennedy kids, always Kennedy kids.

It was easy to explain. "We're Kennedy kids," said **Bob Parish** (Dessie 62–65) when asked to explain how he and his wife, **Pat Summers Parish** (Dessie 62–65) came to be awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award. The award presented by Peace Corps Director Ron Tschetter in a ceremony in Pasadena in July was in recognition of more than 4,000 hours of lifetime volunteer service. Bob and Pat started their volunteer work — and probably put in at least 4,000 hours — as PCVs in Dessie where they met and were married. More recently during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina they worked Katrina's

refugee front lines, aiding displaced New Orleans residents at centers in Arkansas. Bob, 65 at the time and living on what he calls “golden time,” had survived multiple operations for colorectal cancer, months in the hospital and the removal of cancerous sections of his intestine. Yet he and Pat put in days and nights of work that would tax significantly younger and optimally healthy people.

Asked about how it felt to receive the award, Pat said, “It’s sort of embarrassing. Ron Tschetter went over the list of the many things we had done. It felt like being with Ralph Edwards on ‘This Is Your Life.’ It was like my life in review, but it’s not over yet. It’s far from over yet. There’s just a lot of things that have to be done and since we have the time we want to be of service.” The Parishes are also involved in a women’s birthing project that is helping train midwives to serve in Ethiopia and help ameliorate the tragic number of deaths of mothers in childbirth. “In Africa, the average is one in 19 mothers die in childbirth. In Ethiopia, it’s one in seven,” said Pat.

A letter to the editor

Letters or emails to the editor of the HERALD are fairly rare (alas! is anyone reading us?), so whenever we get one, however brief, we usually publish it. This pithy email arrived in September and we are grateful:

Dear E&E RPCV Herald

Hey, I just read The HERALD that you sent for us from Sept. Thanks for sending us those, it was interesting to read.

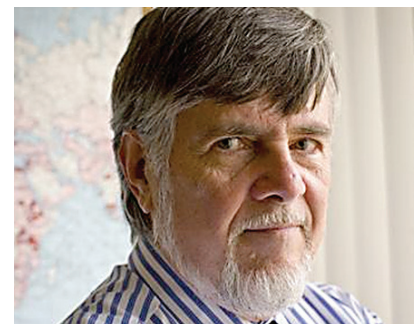
Karen Preskey
US Peace Corps Volunteer
PO Box 581
Agaro, Ethiopia
karenpreskey@hotmail.com

Looking for ...

Marvin Vinande (Lekempte 63–65) is trying to reconnect with **John H. Lawson** (Lekempte 62–64). Drop an email to the HERALD if you can help.

A return to Addis

Phillip C. LeBel (Emdeber 64–67) is on his way back to Ethiopia on a Fulbright Teaching and Research Fellowship.



PHILLIP LEBEL: Back to Addis

LeBel is currently professor of economics in the Department of Economics and Finance at Monclair State University. He will teach at Addis Ababa University and, according to the University press release, undertake research on the topics “Integrating Technology into Economics Learning” and “Risk Management Choices for Sustainable Economic Development.” Precisely what that means is not made clear in the announcement. But LeBel says that he hopes to “explore the use of learning technology in a developing country environment.”

Prize for prized student

Tirussew Teferra was awarded the 2008 Jan Amos Comenius Medal for outstanding achievements and innovations in the field of teaching and educational research at UNESCO’s International Conference on Education on November 26, 2008. Tirussew is Dean of the College of Education, Addis Ababa University. Tirussew was also the student of **Clare Shea**, **Arthur Andersen**, and **Charles McClellan** who taught Tirussew in Debre Marcos in 1965–1968. Clare introduced him to us at the country update meeting of E & E RPCVs at the Chicago conference. We heard him briefly describe efforts to improve the enrollment in elementary and secondary schools. Dr. Tirussew has spearheaded efforts in special education and for classes for blind/visually impaired students. In addition, he was most helpful in the distribution of the 2005 Books for Africa shipment of 35,000 texts and library books for Debre Marcos schools.

It was a high point to meet Harris Wofford again. He came over to greet us for I was holding the Ethiopian flag and Jennifer Riggan the Eritrean flag. Harris told us he had campaigned with Senator Obama for 15 months or so. (No mean feat for a man in his eighties.) He thought that, like Franklin Roosevelt, our new President had the capacity for greatness. Harris said he was thankful to see this day. (To prove it, when a nearby band struck up a tune, he danced and got some female returned Volunteers to join him.)

Carrying the flag

*Editor's note: Right before closing this issue, the HERALD received a wonderful little essay by **Steve Buff** (Addis 64–66, PC Staff, 91–96 and 2001–03). We were out of space to run the whole essay, but here is a foreshortened version:*

When I learned I would have the honor to march with the Peace Corps contingent in the inaugural parade, I saw myself marching before millions of people, cheering wildly. My wife **Evelyn Ashkenaze Buff** (Addis 64–68), whom I met many years ago in Peace Corps training, said dryly, "You have a very rich interior life."

Reality was, of course, different. As a marcher I was separated from the millions of spectators. Most were on the Mall, watching the inauguration on massive JumboTrons. While I, in contrast, was stuck in the largest tent I had ever seen, filled with well over 1000 uniformed, marching band participants and their instruments. I had to crane my neck to try to see the inauguration ceremony on a fuzzy modest-sized TV, partially obscured by the buzz-cut jarheads of dozens of Marines.

Afterwards, we Peace Corps alumni assembled outside, sorted and assembled our flags, got in some kind of formation, then marched and stopped, repeatedly. I was holding the Ethiopian flag and **Jennifer Riggan** (Assab 95–97), the Eritrean flag. We had spent hours out in the freezing cold and dozens of us huddled a few times, banners and all, to block the freezing wind. Unlike the precision bands and drill teams that made up most of the parade, we were the least crisp or disciplined. We couldn't stay in formation for long: we're not the military, or some well-rehearsed band, we're the Peace Corps!


We marched west down Constitution Avenue and for the twentieth time we stopped. As we turned the corner onto Pennsylvania Avenue to begin the march past the White House, very few people remained. The parade's delay and long hours in the bitter cold had driven most of the spectators, a sea of humanity, away. Uniformed security officers lined the curbs. It seemed there were more guards

than spectators. This was a far cry from what I imagined the Inaugural parade to be, but it didn't matter. Soon our new President, his family and other dignitaries would see us as we marched by the White House reviewing stand.

In the enclosed, gleaming white reviewing stand that was built up to the curb, I saw, through a plastic shield but no more than 15 feet away, the man who is now our President. He was beaming, perhaps because his supporter and friend, Harris Wofford, had just passed in the parade before him, holding our banner at the front of our group. As he watched the splendid flags of 139 countries snap in the wind and pass by, Barak continued to smile broadly. Of course, he had many reasons on that grand day to smile and glow. But I like to think, for the few minutes it took our contingent to pass in review, that our President was also basking in the glow emanated by the Peace Corps.

Passings

William Serrille (Merkle 63–65) writes that **Dale Harger** (Asmara 62–64) sends word of the deaths of **Ronald Ferrier** (Asmara 62–64) and **William Schmick** (Addis 62–64). Serrille says he last saw Ron in July 1964 when he was saying goodbye to friends in his favorite bar in Asmara where the owner, also a friend, constantly played Bobby "Blue" Bland's hit, "That's the way love is, take it where you find it or leave it like it is."

Peggy Drury (Jimma, Addis, Asmara 62–64) emailed the HERALD that she heard from **John Coe** (Jimma, Addis 62–66) that **Marianne Fearn** (Jimma, Addis 62–65) passed away suddenly on September 16, 2008. Peggy writes that Marianne "probably stayed in Ethiopia longer than any Ethy I volunteer, over seven years. She was 68 years old when she died. She received her Ph.D. in theater from Northwestern University. Her brother, Steve, who lived with her in Silverton, Co., said that she died of exhaustion. She had been working very hard to create a new playhouse in Silverton. The family wishes that contributions in her memory be made to her theater in Silverton." 

Reunions

Ethiopia VII's (and an VI) meet up in Dallas

Conversations resumed seamlessly after 40 years

by Morris Baker (Bahar Dar 66-68 and M. Susan Hundt-Bergan (Bahar Dar 66-68)

HOW DO YOU CATCH UP on approximately four hundred years of experiences in forty-eight hours? You can't. But it was surely worth trying!

Texas weather is unpredictable, but if you are hoping for a few days when the temperature is just right and the sky is wide-open, try late April in Dallas. So the last week in April was selected by a small, close-knit group of Ethiopia RPCVs for a reunion in north Dallas. The temperature was in the early to mid-seventies; the humidity made those non-Texans in attendance think of Malindi in June. On this weekend Dallas showed off!

From across the U.S., 17 folks who during critical times in their lives felt the love and benefited from the wisdom of **India McCanse** (Staff 66-68) gathered as a complete circle of friends for the first time in forty years. The eight Ethiopia VII (and one VIII) RPCVs — **Morris Baker** (Bahar Dar 66-68), **Michael Goldston** (Hosanna, Bahr Dar 66-69), **Robert Hamilton** (Bahar Dar 65-67), **Homer (Butch) Hayes** (Makelle 66-69), **Mary Susan Hundt-Bergan** (Bahar Dar 66-68), **John Munshower** (Addis 66-68), **Doug McKelvey** (Ghion 66-68), **Susan (Scottie) McKelvey** (Ghion 66-68) and **Art Siegel** (Nazareth 66-69) were accompanied by spouses Hal Bergan, Lori Goldston, Ampie Hayes, Marcia Munshower, and

Roz Siegel. Some family members of India, who passed away in 1997, joined the gathering: her son Dr. Lynn McCanse, his wife Ginny and their youngest daughter Meredith.

While an appropriate amount of time was spent in a reminiscent mode, the majority of this joy-filled event was spent in the present. It is unquestionable that all the RPCVs gathered would count the Peace Corps experience as pivotal in their personal and professional development. The entire group would agree that the encouragement and experience that India shared with them continues to motivate their service to others.

Together we enjoyed sharing and exploring our lives today, great food, the eclectic skyline of downtown Dallas and its tourist attractions, the JFK Memorial at the Texas School Depository Museum, and the grassy knolls and gentle breezes at the Byron Nelson PGA tournament played at the Four Seasons Resort Las Colinas. Douglas McKelvey had decreed that no neckties would be allowed during the meet-up. His decree was honored with alacrity. Sue Hundt-Bergan had hoped that we would spend a little time birding and singing. The entire time spent together was a love song. Art Siegel voiced amazement at how easily the group resumed the conversation after forty years of near silence. It's the nature of true friendship, my friend, isn't it? It's possible that the non-RPCVs might have been



ALL SMILES: L-R: Douglas McKelvey, John Munshower, Scottie McKelvey, Art Siegel, Morris Baker, Mike Goldston, Sue Hundt-Bergan, Robert Hamilton, and Homer Hayes.

just a little bit apprehensive about joining this party. However, a splendid photo tour of the two years spent living and working in Ethiopia (produced by Scottie McKelvey) provided them instant affinity. (It's easy to laugh at silly pictures of earnest college graduates training for Peace Corps.) Friday night ran into Saturday morning. That's saying something for a bunch of folks approaching (or already in) AARP land.

India must be proud of the numerous and diverse investments the group has made and continues to make toward improving our world community. All present agreed that we can't wait another 40 years for our next get-together, if it's going to be on this side of the veil.

How about next year? See you then. 🇺🇸🇪🇹

Smallpox "Rad" Program reunion

Remembering long walkouts, tekul-gaurding dogs and an historic victory

By Tom Ridgik (Begemdir 73-75)

SEVERAL ETHIOPIA RPCVS ATTENDED a reunion for smallpox eradication staff who worked in the last three countries where smallpox was endemic. The reunion was held July 11th and 12th at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Headquarters in Atlanta.

At the technical seminars, D.A. Henderson, the head of the global eradication program, noted that the Peace Corps was a key group in eradicating the disease in Ethiopia. The global eradication program was sponsored by the United Nations,

with CDC playing a large part. About 250 CDC staff served stints in either Bangladesh or India, with about 80 attending the conference, but CDC sent few personnel to Ethiopia. Only 5 staff members involved in the Ethiopian effort attended the reunion and they were all RPCVs! Attendees included **Warren Barrash** (Debra Berhan; Shoa 73-74); **Dave Bourne** (Dessie; Wollo 72-74); **John DeVleming** (Dessie; Wollo 72-74); **Vince Radke** (Koffa 70-73); and **Tom Ridgik** (Gondar; Begemdir 73-75).

Friday's program was an overview of the various ongoing global health programs, which included AIDS/HIV, malaria, polio, neglected tropical diseases (such as guinea worm), tuberculosis, and tobacco. With some luck, both polio and guinea worm will soon be extinct. Only about 1000 cases of polio are reported annually worldwide. But the three endemic countries (Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan) have security problems that are hindering efforts. The tenor of the Friday program was that the smallpox eradication program proved that a large global health program could indeed work, and paved the way for subsequent programs. It was most gratifying to be called "smallpox heroes" and receive a rousing round of applause.

Enthusiasm was in the air that night at a reunion dinner was held at a French restaurant. The Ethiopian Five were the comparatively young kids on the block. It was open mike night with numerous anecdotes of work overseas, with Warren and Vince contributing.

Saturday's program focused on the eradication ef-



THE RAD FIVE: (l. to r.) Tom Ridgik, John DeVleming, Vince Radke, Warren Barrash, Dave Bourne

forts in these three countries from 1973 to 1976. The type of smallpox rampant in India and Bangladesh was the variola major type, with a mortality rate of about 20%. Bangladesh encountered a rough patch. Previously eradicated, the disease was re-introduced and spread at an alarming rate. But due to tireless efforts, the disease was eradicated on the Indian subcontinent in 1975.



A magnified view of the tip of a “bifurcated” (divided into two branches) smallpox vaccination needle. The tip is dipped into the vaccine and the appropriate tiny amount of the vaccine collects between the branches, adhering to the roughened inside edges. The vaccine is then administered by tapping the needle tip against arm multiple times in a small circle.

Ethiopia was the last endemic country with smallpox. Unlike India and Bangladesh, the type of smallpox in Ethiopia was variola minor, with a mortality rate of only 1 or 2%. This actually made eradication efforts more difficult, as there was less incentive for vaccination. In addition to tenacity, smallpox was eradicated because there was a big emphasis on containment, rather than mass vaccination. Find out where the disease is, and then contain it. The vaccine was potent and freeze dried, promoting a long shelf life. And then there was the clever bifurcated needle, a low tech marvel.

With the overthrow of Haile Sellassie in 1974, instability in the country increased. Initially, the effects of overthrow were mild, having a status quo feel to it. But it eventually morphed into the horrific Derg.

How did the overthrow affect the PCVs in the smallpox eradication (“rad” for short) program? Soon thereafter, the Peace Corps allowed Volunteers to either go back to the states or transfer to another program. Also during the period, the UN stepped up their efforts by enlisting helicopters to speed up surveillance in the rugged northern provinces. For those PCVs participating in this mission, it was quite an experience. For those relegated to infantry duties, it was less so. The last smallpox training group was in 1974, with the last PCV serving in the smallpox rad program departing either in late 1975 or 1976. The UN coped with this loss by using more contracted help. Indeed, after a while, one of the few groups allowed to leave Addis Ababa were smallpox workers. But momentum was on our side, with the last reported case occurring in the summer



MOUNTING UP FOR THE RETURN FROM GISHE 1973: from right, Girma, Lewis Kaplin, a British volunteer, and Ali Abduke Warren Barrash

The Legacy of Dysentery

Twice I came down with dysentery in the field. Not an experience that I would recommend. In addition to the pain, the fact of the matter was that the only way to exit the field was to walk out under my own power. Dehydrated and weak, I moved at a snail's pace, frequently stopping along the way. It could have been worse — I wasn't that far from the main road. It only took a full day of walking.

Six months later, we went back to one of these areas to survey whether smallpox was present. The good news was that there was no smallpox. The bad news was that I visited the farmer's compound where I had my bout with dysentery. Because it was dry season, the two roles of toilet paper were still strewn around the farmer's field. The farmer was upset — I had ruined his crops, not to mention aesthetic considerations. I was embarrassed, but there was not that much I could do about it.



OFF ROAD TRANSPORT, NON-PEACE CORPS ISSUE: Warren Barrash riding in search of small pox

of 1976.

As a historical footnote, even though Ethiopia was the last country endemic with smallpox, a case in Somalia appeared in 1977. To this day, no one quite knows the transmission chain of this case, with speculation that it crossed over from Ethiopia.

Both Vince and Warren were on the Saturday program. Vince, who has had a long and successful career at CDC, recounted both his Ethiopian and Bangladesh experiences. Warren told of a long duration field trip with multiple teams. One slide by Warren said it all as it depicted the vast rugged terrain and illustrated how difficult surveillance really was. At the end of Saturday's session, oral histories were taken of our collective experience. Warren and John found time for a trip to the driving range. The reunion culminated with a picnic serving Indian food. And there was one last session in Dave's room with topics ranging from tej, principles of golf, mass transportation, and energy independence.

The exact number of Ethiopian PCVs who served in the smallpox eradication program is not exactly known. There were at least 48, but it's perhaps closer to 100. At any one time, there were at most 25

PCVs active. Surveillance officers were the backbone of the smallpox rad program, and PCVs likely comprised at least half of them.

The PCV experience had its highs and lows. The Ethiopian culture is indeed a rich one. On those extended field trips, we mostly relied on the hospitality of strangers for both food and lodging. It was indeed touching when an Amhara family shared their doro wat, a special occasion for them. And then offered the PCV the choice piece of the small chicken meant for eight people.

PCVs serving in the smallpox rad program had their own unique set of stressors. All those people refusing vaccination. All that incessant barking by the tukel-guarding watchdogs. All the waiting, sometimes days, for an official to show up and then found to be uncooperative. All the health problems, including that occasional bout with dysentery, necessitating a slow and arduous walkout from the field. All those inhaled flies climbing up gorges. All those fleabites and bedbugs. But in the end it was worth it!

Two Postscripts by Tom Ridgik

1. Whatever you do, don't take principles to their logical Extreme

Some real hardcore surveillance officers traveled extremely lightly — a small backpack was it. For shelter, they spent the night in a family's tukel. But my *modus operandi* included a vaccinator, one or two donkeys, and even a donkey driver. I was strictly a foot soldier, no mules for me.

Having donkeys presented their own sets of problems. Sometimes they could not be rented. After a while, we got the bright idea to buy two donkeys, Moolah and Boolah. After a field trip, we would even bind their legs and put them in the back of the Land Rover, and haul them back to Gondar. But if we were returning to an area, we would leave the donkeys, and pay someone to either feed or graze them.

There was that one fateful trip where we decided to leave our donkeys in Debarek, I believe. We were eager to go back home, so we left the donkeys there with a third party and made a crucial mistake: we did not negotiate the price. When we returned to Debarek after about 2 or 3 weeks, we picked up our donkeys and went to settle our grazing bill. We expected the rate to be 10 cents a day, but the vendor wanted something like 50 cents daily.

This I thought to be highway robbery, especially in light of the fact our service was for the public good. It was the principle of the thing! An argument ensued with neither side yielding. With our donkeys already in the back of the Land Rover, my inclination was to go home without paying the vendor anything. He responded by jumping on the hood of the Land Rover.


I responded by driving back to Gondar. After about a kilometer of this standoff, my sage vaccinator, Abebe, advised me that this wasn't such a good idea as our reputation would suffer. So we returned, and found a local judge-type official to hear our case. Abebe was most eloquent in arguing our case — we won! And only paid the normal rate!

2. Abraham Lincoln and Slavery in Ethiopia

Officially, there was no slavery in Ethiopia. But deep in Begemdir province, far removed from the main road, twice I encountered what I was told were slaves. The family owning the slaves did not appear especially wealthy. But they did have what appeared to be slaves who lived in separate tekuls. The slaves definitely had a different physical appearance. And I was told they were owned and passed down from one generation to the next. I'm not sure of what type of farm-work they did, but they served food and poured us beverages. After a finding no smallpox, we were on to the next mountain. My vaccinator, Abebe, and I had this good "brothers in the field" relationship, which meant that, although friendly most of the time, we could get argumentative. After our visit, I started my riff something like "What kind of country is this anyway — condoning slavery?" Abebe became incensed and said absolutely there was no slavery in Ethiopia. He capped off his argument by saying, "Haven't you ever heard of Abraham Lincoln?"

Denver or bust for Ethiopia II

Ethiopia II, the group that served from 1963–65, will celebrate the 45th Anniversary of entering training at UCLA with a reunion in Denver September 11–13, 2009. Denver is where **Gloria Gieseke Curtis** (Asmara), who has served as de facto president and den mother of the group for years, just happens to live. She is, of course, doing the organizing. For which everyone is very thankful.

Bob Matthai (Addis, Gondar) has already set up an excellent website ([www. EE2reunion.com](http://www.EE2reunion.com)) which has information about the Ethiopia II group (loads of embarrassing pictures), news about the reunion and an important survey that will help Gloria and a dragooned committee of helpers plan the event. Already more than 25 RPCVs have indicated that they will be coming to Denver for the reunion. Rooms have been duly reserved. More are welcome. Contact Gloria directly at: don_curtis@msn.com or phone 303/422-3742. 

Travel Notes

A Walk through the Old City of Harar — and a bit beyond the gates

In search of old Peace Corps haunts, an RPCV finds a changed, but still vibrant city

By Alice Gosak (Harar 64–67)

IN SEPTEMBER 2007, I returned to Harar after an absence of 40 years. Harar *Jugol*, the Old City, is now a World Heritage Site, which means that it is subject to and funded for some preservation. The city still has five gates, but like many things in Harar, they have been renamed: Asmaddin Bari (formerly Shoa Ber), Badri Bari, Assum Bari, Argob Bari and Suqutat Bari. I learned that springs existed at each of the gates and that having a water source in Harar itself was considered bad luck. In 1937, water was first piped into the city. Today it remains scarce and problematic; the five springs are now contaminated by wastewater.

The Italian-made gate leading down the main street (Andegna Menged) to the Feres Megala (Horse Market) has been widened as has the street itself. It still accommodates trucks as well as donkeys, chat chewers lying on the sidewalk as well as cell phone users standing in the streets. The Feres Megala itself now features a monument commemorating the Battle of Chalenqo, the late 19th century battle that brought the defeat of the last Emir of Harar by Emperor Menelik. If this historical event escapes your memory, it is because it was not much discussed during the imperial reign. Harari parents deliberately concealed the details of the conquest from their children in the interest of keeping them from bitterness and possible retribution. The Battle of Chalenqo was followed by six months of unfettered rape, pillage and brutality visited on the Hararis by the conquering army. The main mosque was razed; in its place, Medhane Alem Church, shown behind the monument, was erected. The memory of the conquest was kept alive in the

red floors of Harari houses, painted to symbolize the blood that was shed, and the red stripe woven through all the cloth produced in Harar. During the Harar Millennium (the city itself is older than 1,000 years), celebrated in July 2007, a mass marriage of 40 couples took place, commemorating the 700 bridegrooms who were killed at Chalenqo.

Makina Guirguir, the cobbled lane leading from the Feres Megala past the cinema hall (or “cinema hole,” as one of our students inadvertently but aptly named it), is unchanged. It ends at the Megala Gudir (the “big market” formerly called the Megala Guddo). That market area was open in the past but is now crowded with lean-tos and temporary looking shelters used by market women. On a side lane to the left of Makina Guirguir is the Harar Museum, the restored house of Teferi Makonnen, who became Haile Selassie. The house, pictured here, is in the Indian style, with an upper floor of windows commanding a view of the countryside. The first floor has been restored, but squatters remain on the upper floor. As ramshackle as it may look, it has vastly improved in the past five years.

Other sites to be restored in the Old City include the Itegue Menen House and that of Mohammed Ali. The crown jewel of the restoration effort, however, is Rimbaud House on the same lane as the museum. I did not visit the Rimbaud House as it is kept open at unusual hours, which did not include the weekend we visited. Rimbaud House is not the one that had been pointed out to us as the poet’s place when we lived in Harar, but I am assured that the restoration and exhibits there are very well done.



ALICE GOSAK 1964: Ready for Harar

The Ras Makonnen Hospital, built in 1902, has been expanded. I asked who the doctor was and was given the name of a Dr. Mohammed from Harar. I was pleased to see that the doctors are now local.

When I worked there, there were no Ethiopian doctors in the province or, to the best of my knowledge, in the country. The doctors were Czech, Bulgarian, Romanian and Yugoslav. Since my visit, a fifty-bed Hamlin Fistula Center has opened in Harar.

Since it was the weeks before Ramadan, it was the Harari wedding season. We dropped in on two wedding, staying in the crowded courtyard to clap and listen to the singing and drumming. Styles of dress among traditional Harari women have not changed although the dresses seem brighter and are often made of materials other than the cottons and silks of the past. I noticed Oromo girls wearing neck-

laces of beads, the kind used in Native American styles, rather than silver. The potato-colored muslin dresses and orange veils of the past have been replaced by tee-shirts and polo-shirts. Perhaps those I have kept in some long-forgotten trunk are now museum quality.

Kids were something of a menace as I walked through the streets of the Old City. They liked to sneak up and pull my hair. When I lived in Harar, an intricate ballet developed between the country girls and the Peace Corps Volunteers. A country girl would get a glint in her eye when she saw a PCV female approaching. Picking up speed, the country girl would try to touch the breast of the Peace Corps woman, who either walked with her books clutched to her bosom or parried the move with a grace-

ful swoop of her arm. I can report during this visit that none of the female descendents of the Galla Grabber laid a hand on me, something that can be appreciated by those who spent their salad days avoiding their mischievous tweaks.

Outside the Wall

Getting one's bearings in Harar Outside the Wall is not easy these days because of all the construction. The area where the Christian Market used to be is built up; another market now operates just outside of Asmaddin Gate (formerly Shoa Ber). A series of new buildings house Taiwan, the center for buying electronic goods. Gharries are not frequently in evidence in Harar. That is a mercy as the gharry horses I saw were in deplorable condition. People find their way around town by taxi or, less expensively, by *tuk-tuk*, those golf-cart-like vehicles that hold 4-5 people, including the driver.

And finding one's way around town takes some doing as so much has changed. All of the empty spaces in the Butega have been filled in. The infamous post office is still in the same location and Hajji's store is there, minus Hajji who emigrated to Canada in the 1970s when the Somalis bombed the city. I could not identify the site of Antonacci's shop as so much building has taken place around it. Abdul Moheiman Nasser, who was a 12th grader when we started teaching at Medhane Alem Secondary School, has become a well-respected authority and the historian/anthropologist of Harar. He has his office/tourist bureau in a complex of shops with apartments upstairs across from the former Military Academy that were not there in the 1960s.

The tuberculosis hospital and the hospital on the Jijiga Road are still there and in operation. The most impressive thing about Harar, however, was Yemage Hospital. It was started by a Harari man named Sebri Omer, who left the city in 1977 at the age of 15 rather than be conscripted into one of the armies. He went to Djibouti and, after some years, was granted political asylum and settled in Atlanta. Through hard work, he and his wife acquired a gas station then a 7-11 and a car wash. Sebri returned to Harar a few years ago with the idea of investing in a hotel. One look around convinced



RIMBAUD LIVED HERE: Now it's a museum Alice Gosak



YEMAGE HOSPITAL: Now many of the docs are Ethiopian Alice Gosak

him that the city needed more medical services so he sold two of his businesses and bought land on the site of the bombed-out Military Academy Hospital. On it, he built a small state-of-the-art 45-bed hospital. Yemage (“hope” in Harari) that has its own water supply (something only one who has lived in Harar can truly appreciate), a small restaurant, and a state-of-the-art ambulance donated by the city of Atlanta.

Next to the hospital, also on land owned by the former Military Academy is Heritage House, a hotel built by Abdul Jewad, who was a Medhane Alem 12th grader the year I arrived. He is now a physician in London, spending half of the year in Harar.

The Tennis Club is still there and appears to be in use. My house on Crown Prince Road, since re-named, across from TTI is also there; I walked into the compound and told the people assembled there that I had lived there 40 years ago. Now it is a clinic. Across from it, the Provincial Education Office is now an Oromo regional office. I could not quite figure it out. Signs tend to be in four languages — Harari (now written in Amharic script), Oromiffa, Amharic and English — but I missed the English part on this one.

Walking along the start of Yeshimebet Road toward Medhane Alem, I tried to get a look at **Joe Ciuffini’s** (64–66) house. It used to be in from the road; now

a new road runs alongside it. **Nelson Stahlman** (64–66) and **Steve Johnson’s** (64–67) house is still there, but Dr. Ghaswallah’s cherished roses are not lovingly attended as they used to be and have become overgrown. **Ralph Newman’s** (62–64) house is also recognizable at the back gate of Medhane Alem.

Medhane Alem is no more; it is now called Harar TVET College (Technical, Vocational Education and Training). Some 1,950 students are enrolled there. We spoke to Ato Mulugeta, the new director, who showed us the photos that were sent for the 50th anniversary. Many of the former PCVs have been identified in the photos. The front of the main building looks a bit derelict, but there is a new study center down the driveway on the right-hand side. The old building where the shop and typing classes were held is still “the same without changing.” Come to think of it, there is a change — a huge stone cistern between that building and the main one with drainpipes to catch rainwater.

We went down the road behind Medhane Alem. We failed to identify **Pat and Steve Johnson’s** (64–66) old house and the one where **Pat Egan** (63–65) lived. The houses must have been occupied by military officers as the fences were higher and it was impossible to see into the compounds.

Ras Makonnen’s equestrian statue still stands in the square, but Ras Makonnen School is no longer visible from it. A building has gone up in front of it. The Ministry of Education is now called the Harari People National Regional State Education and Capacity Building Bureau. Ato Nebil, the bureau head, would love to have former PCVs return to Harar to teach at TTI (now the Teacher Training College with 4,000 students). The program through Georgetown University that does provide teachers to Ethiopia will not send them to Harar because of the lack of water.

The lack of water continues, but the allure of Harar is still there, just as is Mount Kondudo, hazy but distinct. Although its name might have changed, the sense of place Kundudo gives is the same. 🇪🇹🇪🇹

Reminiscences

The Music — and Friendships — Never End

Two recently released CDs revisit a glorious era of music

By Charlie Sutton (Addis 66–71)

IT IS A PLEASURE to accept the invitation of the HERALD to share memories with fellow RPCVs. Anyone who visits Ethiopia even briefly, it seems, remains permanently affected by the experience. I spent five years there; my connection with Ethiopia and Ethiopians continues to this day and has immeasurably enriched my life. Recently things seem to have come full circle when I had the privilege to

work once again with Ethiopian musical colleagues and friends of more than forty-years'-standing on two new CDs. I am eager to tell you about these recordings; but first, a little background.

A little background

Like many other "B.A. generalists" (a term the Peace Corps politely used for recent college graduates who had little if any work experience and no particular skills), I was probably sent to Ethiopia

because English teachers were needed there. Native speakers of the language had at least the potential to become good teachers of it. I was about to receive a bachelor's degree in English when I applied to join the Peace Corps in the winter of 1966. The day after graduation in early June, I flew from Boston to Salt Lake City to begin TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) training at the University of Utah with about 100 other group VII Volunteers. An amateur musician, I had brought along an accordion and guitar. I learned from our Amharic teachers



OUT IN FRONT: Sutton performing in 1969 at Columbia University during Orchestra Ethiopia's U.S. tour

some popular Ethiopian songs. We put on a music program for the trainees and staff, and I accompanied the teachers on the accordion as they sang tunes like "Oo-oota Ayaskeffam" and "Almaz Min Ida New." By means of a portable reel-to-reel tape recorder (LPs of Ethiopian music were rare then, and cassette tapes had yet to come into use) the teachers introduced me to performances by contemporary groups like the Bodyguard, Army, and Police Orchestras and the Ras Band. It wasn't until I arrived in Addis Ababa that I first heard the sound of Ethiopian traditional instruments.

My assignment was to teach freshman English in the Science and Engineering College of Haile Selassie I (now Addis Ababa) University, located near Arat Kilo. Sometimes after work, in the late afternoon or early evening, I would wander around the back streets in the neighborhoods between Arat and Siddist Kilo and go into *bunna bets* and *tej bets*, striking up conversations with the patrons. One *bunna bet* had an accordion player I enjoyed listening to. I first heard live mesenko music in a *tej bet*.

One day in December 1966, I saw a poster on a bulletin board at HSIU advertising a concert by Orchestra Ethiopia at the Creative Arts Center on the Siddist Kilo campus. I attended it and saw a wonderful show. The music was played entirely on traditional instruments — mesenkos, krars, washints, begena, meleket, and imbiltas, plus a variety of drums.

Along with the characteristic songs and dances of many ethnic groups, charismatic performers presented beautiful original pieces of music and lyrics that had been composed by the group's director.

The instruments were unlike anything I had ever heard or seen. I wanted to learn to play one of them. I went back to the Creative Arts Center the day after the concert and asked the director of the Orchestra, Tesfaye Lemma, if it would be possible for me to take lessons from a member of the group. Tesfaye introduced me to one of Orchestra Ethiopia's most accomplished players, Getamesay Abbebe. The following week I began taking lessons from Getamesay on the mesenko, a one-stringed bowed instrument made of goatskin stretched over a diamond-shaped wooden frame.

After I had studied with Getamesay for several months, Tesfaye invited me to play and sing with the Orchestra in its next performance at the Creative Arts Center. I was hesitant to accept this unexpected invitation. I didn't think my playing was good enough, and I had doubts about how the audi-

from Wikipedia.com

mesenko — a one-string fiddle

krar — a six-string lyre

washint — a bamboo flute

begena — a large ten-string lyre

meleket — a long trumpet without fingerholes

imbilta — flute having no finger holes, and producing only two tones



GHION HOTEL GIG 1967: Melaku Gelaw, Sutton, Getamesay Abbebe, sitting left to right, just as they do on the album cover of "Reunion," issued 40 years later

ence would react to an outsider like myself; but, as Tesfaye had predicted, the reaction was quite positive. After the show that night, he asked me to join the Orchestra for all its performances — at the Creative Arts Center, in New Years celebrations at Cinema Ambassador and Cinema Ras, at parties and weddings, at hotels, on radio and television, and on tours of the provinces.

In 1968, Orchestra Ethiopia was dismissed from Haile Selassie I University because of budget reductions. Tesfaye Lemma and I decided to try to keep the group going as an independent organization. We rented a small house in Shi Semagna for rehearsals. The Peace Corps gave us the use of an office at their headquarters near Arat Kilo. It was equipped with a telephone extension on which we accepted wedding and party engagements.

When my initial Peace Corps tour, during the second year of which I worked as Amharic language officer for Peace Corps/Ethiopia, neared its end, I requested an extension in order to serve as administrator and business manager of Orchestra Ethiopia. Volunteers who extended were given a one-month vacation in the States before beginning their third year of service. With the help of Peace Corps Washington and a New York booking agent I arranged for the Orchestra to make a five-week concert tour of the U.S. The tour took place in February and March of 1969. We performed in twenty eastern and midwestern cities and appeared on national television on the Ed Sullivan Show.

I finished my third Peace Corps extension and returned to the U.S. in 1971. I met my wife Eve shortly thereafter, at a resort hotel in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, where we were both employed. Since 1972 I have taught music privately and worked as a guitarist and pianist in Connecticut bars and restaurants, including, for the past nine years, Lalibela Ethiopian Restaurant in New Haven.

Orchestra Ethiopia thrived under the leadership of Tesfaye Lemma until shortly after the revolution of 1974, when it was disbanded. After several years as the general manager of the Ras Theater in Addis

Ababa, Tesfaye emigrated to the U.S. in 1987 and founded the Center for Ethiopian Arts and Culture in Washington, D.C. He served as its director until 2000, when he retired because of ill health and took up residence in a nursing home. Tesfaye and I have continued to work together on Ethiopian music projects. I am happy to have this opportunity to tell you about two recent ones in particular — the CDs *Ethiopiquest 23: Orchestra Ethiopia* and *Zoro Gettem: Reunion*.

Ethiopiquest 23: Orchestra Ethiopia

Five years ago when visiting Tesfaye at the Rock Creek Nursing Center in Washington, D.C., I noticed a large carton under his bed, brimming with dusty old reels of fraying audiotape. He explained that the carton had been discovered in his former residence in Addis Ababa and shipped to him. With the help of our friend Andrew Laurence, director of the Mass Media Center at George Washington University Law School, who kindly made available to us his equipment and expertise, Tesfaye and I listened to all of the 65 old tapes. They proved to be a treasure trove of studio and live recordings of Orchestra Ethiopia made in the late '60s and early '70s when the Orchestra was in its heyday. None of the recordings had ever been commercially released. The sound quality of many was remarkably good. Over the ensuing months Tesfaye and I spent many long days with Andrew at the Media Center as he devoted all his spare moments to painstakingly repairing the tapes and converting them to compact discs. As he did so, Tesfaye and I listened to them again and made a catalogue of their contents.

Andrew suggested that we send a representative selection of the recordings to Francis Falceto, whose famous CD series *Ethiopiquest* has been introducing Ethiopian music to a wider audience around the world since 1996. Francis was delighted by our offering and promised to devote a future number in the series to the music of Orchestra Ethiopia. An anthology would be culled from Tesfaye's collection. Over the next three years Tesfaye and I worked in cooperation with Francis to prepare the music, explanatory notes, and photographs for Ethi-



opiques 23: Orchestra Ethiopia, which was issued in February 2008, to universally enthusiastic reviews. This beautifully produced CD includes a 32-page illustrated booklet as well as an essay (called "poignant" by one reviewer) setting forth the entire history of the Orchestra and discussing its significance. The essay and many additional photographs are contained in a PDF file on the CD itself. Ethiopiques 23 is available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and other major retail outlets. PCVs who remember Orchestra Ethiopia will, I believe, particularly like this CD; but it has proved surprisingly accessible and enjoyable even to listeners completely unfamiliar with Ethiopian music.

Zoro Gettem: Reunion

In the spring of 2006, Getamesay Abbebe visited the U.S. to participate in the wedding of his son Wondwossen which took place in a Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C. Getamesay had retired two years earlier after a long and distinguished career as lead mesenkoist of the Hager Fikir Theater in Addis Ababa. Getamesay and I entertained the wedding guests by playing our mesenkos and singing together just as we had done on many similar occasions in Addis Ababa forty years earlier. Also present at the wedding was Melaku Gelaw, who like Getamesay was an original member of Orchestra Ethiopia. He



was its lead washint player at the time I joined the group in 1967. He now lives in Arlington, Virginia. Getamesay, Melaku, and I decided to meet the next day and visit Tesfaye in the nursing home. The four of us went out to dinner at Etete Restaurant, where we came up with the idea of collaborating on a new CD of Ethiopian traditional music. Tesfaye agreed to direct us as he had in the old days. He ended up singing on the record as well. What's more, he devised an attractive format for our presentation:

my renditions of vocals I used to do with Orchestra Ethiopia (plus a song Tesfaye composed especially for the CD) alternate with traditional instrumental numbers performed by Getamesay and Melaku on mesenko, krar, and washint.

We made the album during several sessions at the Washington, D.C. studio of Abiyou Solomon, who did a beautiful job of capturing and mixing the sound of our group. We called the CD "Zoro Gettem" ("Reunion"). The eminent portraitist Mekonnen Ayele took our photographs for the cover and booklet. Graphic artist Ephrem Girma designed the layout. Zoro Gettem is distributed in the U.S.

by Nahom Records. We decided to donate all proceeds from sales of the CD to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University. By March of last year, U.S. sales at Ethiopian stores and on the Internet were nearing the goal of \$10,000 we had set for our gift. I traveled to Addis Ababa in April to promote the CD there. Before I returned home in June, Getamesay and I presented a check for 100,000 birr (about \$10,000), representing the combined U.S. and Ethiopia proceeds from sales of Zoro Gette: Reunion up to that time, to the director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Elsabet Weldegiorgis. Dr. Richard Pankhurst, who founded the Institute in 1963, and his wife Rita attended the presentation ceremony in her office.

Zoro Gettem: Reunion remains on sale at Book World stores in Addis Ababa, at Ethiopian markets and record stores in the U.S., and on the Internet. All proceeds continue to go to the Institute. To purchase the CD on line, visit www.nahomrecord.com and click on the button "CD 2" at the top of the home page. Then scroll down through the images of CD covers, and you will find Zoro Gettem: Reunion pictured in row 5.

If old friends or anyone else would like to get in touch, please write to charles@zorogettem.com. I will be very happy to hear from you.  

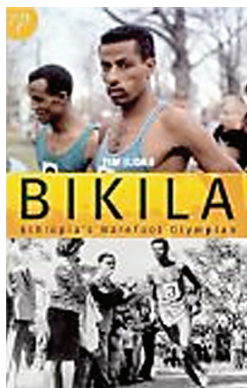


REUNION:back row: Melaku Gelaw, Sutton; front row: Tesfaye Lemma, Getamesay Abbebe



Books

Reviews



Bikila: Ethiopia's Barefoot Olympian,

by Tim Judah

Reportage Press, 2008

175 pages, £12.99

Barefoot Runner: The Life of Marathon Champion Abebe Bikila

By Paul Rambali

Serpent's Tail, an Imprint of Profile Books. 2006

315 pages, £8.99

Reviewed by Steve Silver (Wollisso/Chion 63-65)

I WAS TEACHING IN WOLLISSO in 1964 with the Peace Corps when news arrived that Abebe Bikila had won the marathon in the Tokyo Olympics. In addition to celebrating, my students were laughing about the fact that instead of collapsing after his victory, Bikila was doing calisthenics. According to Tim Judah, in *Bikila: Ethiopia's Barefoot Olympian*, the marathon champion was actually fighting off dizziness and cramps.

A detailed portrayal of Bikila's winning the 1960 Olympic Marathon running barefoot through the streets of Rome, as well as his success in Tokyo in 1964 — this time with shoes — appears both in Judah's book and in *Barefoot Runner* by Paul Rambali. Both books trace the changes in Bikila's life after his victories that led to his tragic auto accident and to his death less than a decade after the glory of Tokyo.

As a shepherd boy Bikila became used to running long distances simply to get from one place to another. "We Abyssinians are a poor people with no mechanical transport," he is quoted as saying. "So we run everywhere on foot. Forty kilometres are nothing to me." So Bikila was a natural long distance runner. Judah contends that a marathon run requires two separate qualities. During the initial 30 kilometers it is essential to have stamina — "the ability to keep up a high speed for a long period of

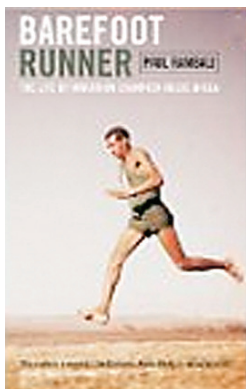
time." But during the last 12 kilometers what is required is endurance — "the simple strength to keep going." Judah quotes the Swiss sports writer Alain Lunzenfichter who attributed Bikila's genius to his extreme endurance.

But, Bikila would not have succeeded, indeed, probably would never have gone to the Olympics at all without Onni Niskanen. Niskanen, a Swede, served as coach, masseur, political problem solver, and overall father figure to the marathoners in Haile Selassie's Imperial Body Guard. His life is intertwined with Bikila's throughout these narratives. Both Judah and Rambali credit Niskanen with being the force behind Bikila's victories. In Tokyo, when other runners quickly leaped ahead of Bikila and others boxed him in, Bikila remembered Niskanen's advice to simply maintain the comfortable training pace they had practiced and to not worry about being behind in the beginning. Bikila's adherence to Niskanen's guidance prevailed.

The joy that Bikila's victories brought to Ethiopians was extraordinary. The head of Ethiopia's Olympic committee, Yidnekatchew Tessema later wrote about his experience in the stadium in Rome as he realized Bikila was finishing first:

"We were immersed in a deep feeling of ecstasy and awe. Soon Abebe appeared flanked by two burning torches on his left and right side and we picked up our jackets and put them on proudly to show our country designation and jumped into the field to meet our hero as he ran through the finishing ribbon. We rushed on him and embraced him."

When the team returned from Rome, thousands of people lined the route from the airport to the center of Addis Ababa. The Emperor awaited and told Bikila and the other marathoner Abebe Wakjira: "Thanks to both of you. In the name of all Ethiopians you have won a great victory." Sadly, Judah's description of Bikila's life after his 1964 win in Tokyo reads like a classic cautionary tale of the downfall that inevitably follows in the footsteps of



hubris. As Judah tells it, Bikila replaced humility with arrogance, simple living with too much alcohol and too much womanizing. By the time the 1968 Olympics rolled around, he had become accustomed to driving around in the Volkswagen the emperor had given him. Gone was the simple shepherd boy who was required to run long distances every day. When he ran in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, he collapsed at about the 15-kilometer mark. In 1969, probably after a bout with some whiskey, he crashed his VW and was trapped overnight. He was confined to a wheelchair until his death in 1973.

Of the two books I found Rambali's the more compelling narrative. The dialogue he creates breathes life into the biography and his literary skills provide drama to the lives of both Bikila and Niskanen. Judah's work is more straightforward journalism. He is clearly not the stylist Rambali is. Judah's narrative proceeds in roughly chronological order. The drama is provided by pithy quotes drawn from the works of others. "The little Abyssinian races along with his thin, sinewy legs like some long-distance runner of Biblical times, nimble as a deer," is a great line, but it is not his. If you want to flesh out this already familiar tale, try Judah's work that is a pretty. If you want the tale told almost as an historical novel, pick up Rambali. (Both books, published in Britain, are available on Amazon.com.)

Lessons of Peace and Development: Gurage Entrepreneurship in Ethiopia

by Daniel Teferra

University Press of America, 2008

104 pages, \$19.95

Reviewed by Phillip G. LeBel (Emdeber 64-67)

ANYONE INTERESTED IN FINDING the keys to successful development turns sooner or later to the role of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is a behavior that flourishes in an open market environment. It is strongly focused on individual initiative. It serves as the catalyst to innovation in product development, changes in technology, and in the creation of new markets. Daniel Teferra, who teaches econom-

ics at the University of Wisconsin/Whitewater, has written a non-technical view of entrepreneurship in the Gurage population in Ethiopia. He provides an interesting profile of how entrepreneurship takes particular form in Ethiopia, a country with one of the lowest levels of per capita income in the developing world. In this short overview of Ethiopian society and economy, Professor Teferra notes how the Gurage have adapted to the changing economic and social environment to bring about a degree of innovation.

Entrepreneurship is not a new subject. One of the earliest expositions on entrepreneurship is Joseph Schumpeter's 1911 essay, *The Theory of Economic Development*. Published originally in German, it was translated into English in 1934 and has been in print ever since. Schumpeter's definition of entrepreneurship is similar to the one given in *Lessons of Peace*: an emphasis on the role of the individual, the use of informal social ties, and a willingness to undertake things in a different way from what has preceded. Although Schumpeter went on to describe the psychological characteristics of the entrepreneur in considerable detail, he emphasized that entrepreneurship is neither inherited nor something that can be sustained or predicted, nor, for that matter, taught in a formal educational sense. Thus, Schumpeter leaves open the question of why some individuals choose to become entrepreneurs, and others do not.

Professor Teferra emphasizes what he considers to be the key factors in Gurage entrepreneurship: devotion to work as a dignified activity, shared cooperative social networks, and a high propensity to save and invest. In his review of research on entrepreneurship he takes up some more recent efforts to translate Schumpeter's theory into measurable units. One of the more notable efforts in this regard is the work by David McClelland, a social psychologist who taught at Harvard University for several years, and was the author of *The Achieving Society* (1961).

One of McClelland's students was former Peace Corps/Ethiopia country director David Berlew. It was this connection that led McClelland and a group

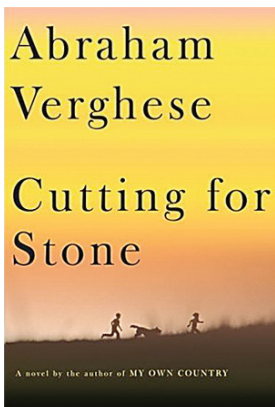
Also entertaining and highly educational are a set of essays about the origins of the language, the history of scripts, and, yes, the secrets of verb stems. The book written with Anbessa Teferra and published in Germany in a handsome volume by Rödiger Köppe Verlag, Cologne. You can find more information about the book and where to buy it from the rather clumsy and slightly unfriendly web site <http://www.koeppe.de/>. Go to "English," then pull down "shortcut" and go to Grover's name. To order a copy, at about €59, or about \$75, go to the "order" and send a fax or email. It's worth the trouble and expense.

Also worth buying is the new mystery thriller by Dick Lipez (Debre Markos, Addis 62–64) who writes under the name of Richard Stevenson. NPR listed it among the five best mystery novels of the year and the Washington Post gave *Death Vows* (MLR Press, 198 pp. \$14.99) a favorable review.

"This is Stevenson's ninth Donald Strachey novel," wrote the Post reviewer, "and his deliciously clipped style makes room for character and a heavy helping of humor without sacrificing pacing. The author is particularly adept at using snippets of rapid-fire dialogue to establish characters' personalities, which tend toward the sarcastic." This book and other mysteries by Lipez/Stevenson are easily ordered on Amazon.com.

A reader called our attention to a review of Abraham Verghese's first novel called *Cutting for Stone* (Knopf, 560pp \$26.95). The review said that the book is "set primarily in an Ethiopian hospital called Missing (a misprint of "mission") in the capital of Addis Ababa" and is "half literary novel, half soap opera, an exhausting and fantastic evocation of the life of a pair of twins whose mother was a nun and father an English surgeon."

The book starts in 1954 and goes through 2004 and touches the major themes of the period, especially what the reviewer calls the "cruelty of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie." Interested? We suggest you read the first chapter on Amazon before you decide to buy it.



Coyne's Bookshelf

by John Coyne (Addis 62–64, Staff: 64–67, 95–00)

Reconnoitering in Abyssinia: A Narrative of the Proceeding of The Reconnoitering Party, Prior to the Arrival of the Main Body of The Expeditionary Field Force

by Colonel H. St. Clair Wilkins (1870)

Savage Abyssinia

by James E. Baum (1927)

Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia

by James E. Baum (1935)

From Red Sea to Blue Nile: A Thousand Miles of Ethiopia

by Rosita Forbes (1925, 1935)

When the Going Was Good

By Evelyn Waugh (1947)

LET ME BEGIN THIS COLUMN about old books on Ethiopia by telling you how I met this beautiful English woman on the island of Menorca in the summer of 1973. She is only tangentially involved with my collecting of old books on Ethiopia, but it's a nice tangent.

She was a famous model when I met her, famous in a limited English sort of way, yet after a month on Menorca — where she wouldn't tell me what she did for a living — she somehow become enthralled by my stories of Ethiopia (of course, I embellished all of them!). I told Sandra (her real name) that I was looking for old books about Ethiopia, particularly one on Napier's expedition to Ethiopia. At the time I had the idea of writing a novel about Emperor Theodorus and the assault by Napier on Magdala in 1868. Sandra suggested I visit London on my way home and do some research in the great used bookstores of the city.

And that is how I ended up on Berkeley Square one cold and rainy afternoon in September. She appeared looking like — in a limited sort of way again — like Audrey Hepburn in “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” still tan from the Mediterranean summer. She led me inside Maggs Bros. Ltd., a renowned and wonderful antiquarian bookstore on the Square.

Inside the high-vaulted-ceilinged store, I met J. Browning, who was in charge of the military department of the bookstore. I must admit now I haven’t the memory to recall all the names and places of that rainy September day in London, but I was wise enough, if not to keep the English model, at least to save the man’s business card. J. Browning — and everyone else in the store — was taken by Sandra, and knew whom she was, even if I didn’t, and yes, of course, they knew all about Napier and Theodorus and Magdala.

Browning disappeared into the stacks and returned with a thick, reddish hardback trimmed in gold, and full of thick folded marvelous maps, their copy of *Reconnoitering in Abyssinia: A Narrative of the Proceeding of The Reconnoitering Party, Prior to the Arrival of the Main Body of The Expeditionary Field Force* written by Colonel H. St. Chair Wilkins, a royal engineer, and aide-of-camp to the Queen.

The Reconnoitering Force had left Bombay in September of 1867 and arrived at “Massowah” in October to map the trail up into the highlands and to Magdala where the Emperor was holding European missionaries captive. The book opens with this wonderful paragraph:

“In August, 1867, the British Government resolved upon the invasion of Abyssinia. It was decided to dispatch a military expedition to that remote country, for the purpose of releasing from the hands of the Christian King Theodorus a British Consul and an Envoy and suite confined in irons in the fortress of Magdala without just cause, and contrary to the law of nations; and to obtain full satisfaction for the dishonour thus cast upon the British nation.”

The book cost £15 and Sandra bought it for me on

the spot, saying that it was my “welcoming gift” to London. I never wrote that novel on Theodorus, and Sandra went on to become a minor movie actress. In “Two for the Road” starring Audrey Hepburn, she is one of those beautiful British “birds” hitchhiking their way through Europe when they meet up with Albert Finney. I still, however, have the book and occasionally carefully open the old maps of the reconnaissance and remember that rainy day in London in the fall of 1973. Old books are great for that reason alone.

Old Book, Old Stories

The shelves of my office library hold dozens of books about Ethiopia and each has a story to be told about them. I have, for example, two copies of a book written by James E. Baum. One was published in 1927 before the Italian invasion of the Empire, and the other in 1935. The first is titled, *Savage Abyssinia*, the second retitled, *Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia*. Clearly some political correctness had taken hold of James E. Baum and his publisher.

Both books are dedicated to Louis Agassiz Fuertes of Cornell University. Fuertes and Baum came up with the idea of an expedition to Ethiopia for the “purpose of collecting museum specimens; mammals and birds.” They sought out Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, curator of mammals of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, to get him to fund the expedition. It turns out that Osgood had a similar idea about collecting mammals in Ethiopia. Off they all went to hunt kudu, gerunhuk, zebra, oryx and ibex, south of Addis Ababa and north as far as the Seimiens. Today, at the Field Museum, you can see the results of their journey.

Those of us who attended at special reception at the Field Museum several years back will recall the artifacts that were on display for a special viewing, an event arranged by Mike McCaskey (Fiche 1965–67). We also saw an old black-and-white film taken by C. Suydarn Cutting of New York, who Baum lists in his forward as a “sportsman and at one time court tennis champion.”

The second edition of this book, published ten

years after the expedition, is the most interesting as Baum has added a chapter, his views of Haile Selassie and Ethiopia. His observations — ten years after — benefited from time, distance and experience. That final chapter, in the second edition, is worth the price of the book. Baum insights and observations have held up these many years later.

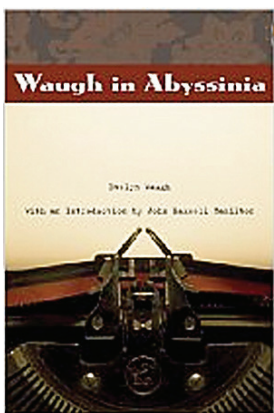
Women Who Walk In The Wild

From Red Sea to Blue Nile by Rosita Forbes is one of those travel books written by plucky British women who, often on their own, trekked overland through parts of Africa and then returned to England to tell all about the “dark continent” in lecture series and in pages of thick volumes of prose. Rosita Forbes came into Ethiopia from “Jibuti” as the capital of French Somaliland was then spelled, by train to Dire Dawa. From there she lists in the back of her book a “Table of Marches” giving the dates, times of departure and arrival, marching hours, and approximate mileage, along with her comments. For example, of her first two-day march, from Dire Dawa to Harrar, she writes:

“Up Valley of Harri. Climbed from Dire Dawa 3,700 ft. to Plateau, 6,000 ft. Passed Lake Balls at 6,000 ft. up. Plateau and cultivation. Harrar 17 miles. Lare village on rise above plain.”

The book was published in 1925, then reissued in 1935, because, as Field Marshall Viscount Allenby writes in his Foreword, “This edition appears at a time when it should be of special and wide interest. World history is being made in and about Abyssinia, whose fate may seriously affect the future of civilization as we know it.”

Joan Rosita Forbes was an amazing traveler and journalist. Born in 1893 she died in 1967. Married at 17, she first lived in India, China and Australia, Divorced in 1917, she traveled home alone through Africa. After driving an ambulance in WW I, she went to the Far East with a woman friend and wrote her first travel book, *Unconducted Wanderers*. Forbes worked as a journalist in Paris and North Africa, married again in 1921, and traveled to Arabia and Morocco, and then to Ethiopia.




Her final words of the Ethiopian book are: “So, after 1,090 miles, most of them on gradients only suited to a centipede, we departed from Abyssinia, the richer for our cases of exposed film and a host of memories grave and gay, the poorer for the little bit of oneself that one leaves on every journey.” Never finer departing words ever said by a traveler.

Writing Bitterly About Addis Ababa

No one has written better or more bitingly about Ethiopia than Evelyn Waugh. He first went to Addis Ababa in 1930 for the crowning of Negus Ras Tafari as the Emperor Haile Selassie. He went in the hopes of getting material for a novel or a travel book. Waugh paid for the trip himself because he could not get a newspaper to underwrite the trip, but he gained enough material to write *Remote People*, his second travel book, published in the summer of '31, and his third novel, *Black Mischief*, published in '32. Only the first part of *Remote People* is about Ethiopia, and the book is considered Evelyn's best travel book, with the Ethiopian part outshining the rest.

Waugh dealt with the Emperor's coronation in several books, including his collection of travel writing, *When the Going Was Good*. Our good friend and editor of this publication, Barry Hillenbrand, alerted me to a paperback published recently by the Louisiana State University Press entitled, *Waugh in Abyssinia* that focuses on Waugh's second trip to Ethiopia in 1935 where he went to cover the invasion of Ethiopia by the Italian. These two books alone have first class prose from a caustic soul who found in Haile Selassie and the Ethiopians plenty to write about.

Editor's note: This review begins a new regular feature for the HERALD. Each issue John will write about Ethiopia/Eritrea books that he has enjoyed over the years -- or about books which seem important to him and our shared history of Peace Corps. Since 1989 Coyne has been editor of the ever excellent "Peace Corps Writers," which he, along with HERALD publisher Marian Beil, has recently transformed into part of his new ambitious venture, www.PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org. 

RPCV Legacy Program

An Opportunity to Serve Again

Deteriorating conditions make support of Legacy Projects more urgent than ever

by Bob Matthai (ADDIS, CONDAR 63-65), Manager, E&E RPCVs Legacy Program

I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY that serving as PCVs in Ethiopia or Eritrea was for most of us an intense, meaningful and unforgettable experience. We helped improve the lives of the people of these two countries and we ourselves benefited in various ways. Many of us have continued to provide assistance through contributions to the E&E RPCVs Legacy Program, which since its inception in 2003 has raised \$99,142.33 for education- and health-related projects in Ethiopia and Eritrea .

Unfortunately, over time the need for assistance has grown and in recent months dire reports from various agencies have reminded us how much the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea are suffering from environmental problems and the worldwide financial downturn:

- Consecutive seasons of failed rains, exacerbated by a rapidly growing population, rising inflation, endemic poverty, and limited government capacity, have led to continuing chronic food insecurity and water shortages in Ethiopia. (USAID report 9/08) The inflation rate is over 50% and food prices are skyrocketing. (Bloomberg US 10/08)
- The Ethiopian national food reserve continues to shrink, forcing the government to cut by a third the monthly rations of people affected by the drought. (Fortune Ethiopia , 10/08)
- Shortages in seasonal rain have reduced the

amount of water behind the dams forcing the Ethiopian government to reduce power generation and ration electricity in some areas. (Ethiopian Electric and Power Corporation, 10/08)

These reports cannot begin to convey the human toll these events are taking. If there can be a bright side to such stark facts, it is that the US dollar can still go a long way in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and can still make a real difference in people's lives. A contribution of \$30 to \$50 can help students stay in school, improve AIDS care and prevention, or bring literacy to those who cannot read.

Given current economic conditions in the US this hardly seems the appropriate time to ask for contributions to programs serving Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, the needs are real, and we hope you will consider supporting one of E&E RPCVs' three current RPCV Legacy Program projects at whatever level you can afford: :

- Borana Student Advancement. Help students, particularly girls, in rural southern Ethiopia enter and graduate from school and compete successfully for university admission. \$35 can give 6 disadvantaged students summer advancement courses in English, math and science.
- HIV/AIDS Books. Help rural healthcare providers improve and extend HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in Ethiopia and Eritrea . \$50 will give

2 key reference books on HIV/AIDS and general medical care to a rural health care worker serving thousands of patients each year.

- Ethiopia Reads in Awassa. Help support a community library that promotes literacy among all age groups in Awassa, Ethiopia. \$30 can buy 30 high-quality, multi-lingual books that will be read by hundreds of children and adults.

Contributions like these will definitely improve the lives of many Ethiopian and Eritrean people. You helped Ethiopia and Eritrea when you served there as a PCV; and you can still make a difference today.

To make a contribution see the next-to-the-last page of this newsletter. To learn more about these projects visit www.eerpcv.org/legacyprogram/about.html. We would like to increase the number of Legacy projects. We would welcome projects designed by RPCVs who are back in the U.S. now. We are also exploring the idea of designing some smaller mini-grants for PCVs currently serving in Ethiopia. So if you have an idea you would like to discuss please drop me a note at rmatthai@sbc-global.net

The Borana Summer Program Report

Fuller Torrey (Staff 64–66), the champion of the Borana Project, emailed the HERALD a report from Dr. Teshome Shibire, the Director of the Department of Psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine of Addis Ababa University, describing the activities that are being supported by the Legacy donations. Teshome is a friend and colleague of Torrey who is helping direct the Borana Summer Program. Here's Teshome's most encouraging report:

Summer program

This year the Borana summer program went very well. We held sessions for 8 weeks in two schools. A total of 426 students participated. They were taught by 25 teachers, who were university students on summer break. We spent a total of 32,000 birr (about \$3,300).

Sponsoring girls in school

This summer we added a 2-day summer camping experience that was attended by 60 of the 62 girls who we sponsor in schools. At the camp we discussed gender-related issues in Borana, academic problems and bad traditional practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation etc.

We also created an opportunity for educated women from the area who are working out of the region to come and talk with members of our program. This provides a chance for them to provide encouraging suggestions to the young students. It also creates an opportunity for the girls to know each other and share experiences among themselves.

This year school started in early September and we accepted 63 students in the support program. The majority of the students were with us in the last few years. We have now two girls in university level education. One is in her third year studying health science at Alemaya. And the other is in her first year in agricultural science in Baher Dar. We pay house rent for 28 of these girls in addition to other material support. Many of these girls are courageously pressing on with their education. For example, the parents of one of girls in our program arranged a marriage for her at age 16. She refused to marry and ran away to a nearby town. Following this the parents withheld all the support she needed to go to school. But she was able to continue her education because she had our support in school. She is now in tenth grade and we are sure that she has a potential to go to collage.

About Borana

The situation in Borana depends very much on rain — a factor that nobody has control over. Up until early October it was very dry. Both the people and their cattle suffered from the drought in the area. At present it is raining and the area looks like a place that has never been dry. The rainy season is usually short. How long the rain will continue is a matter of the concern for all Borana people. We believe that education is an alternative at least for some in such conditions.

Ethiopia Reads in Awassa Report

Lois Shoemaker (Asmara 62–64), the Champion of the Ethiopia Reads in Awassa Legacy project reports continued enthusiasm for this innovative reading program. She was so enthusiastic about Ethiopia Reads' cause being taken up by E&E RPCVs that she herself wrote a \$1,000 check to get things going. The co-founder of the Ethiopia Reads (the Ethiopian program of which Ethiopia Reads in Awassa is a part), Yohannes Gebregeorgis, was featured on CNN's "Heroes" Special aired in November. The publicity was helpful, of course, but more funds are needed to keep the Donkey Mobile Library on the road. Laura Bond of Ethiopia Reads sent this update on the program:

For many children in Awassa, Ethiopia, The Donkey Mobile Library operated by Ethiopia Reads is the place to be on Saturday afternoon. Every week, kids walk through cornfields and farmlands to reach

the donkey-powered library that sets up shop in a field in the center of town. An ingenious cart contraption that houses more than 500 books, the Donkey Mobile Library serves boys and girls who come to read storybooks in English as well as the local Ethiopian languages of Amharic, Sidama and Oromo. Snow White and Winnie the Pooh not only help the children pass the time in a safe and inviting environment, they invite these children to enter the world of books, largely unknown to most children in Ethiopia.

The Donkey Mobile Library is one of two major programs operated by Ethiopia Reads in Awassa. The Awassa Reading Center, located on a main street, is a free public library for children aged 3–18. Since moving into a new location this spring, the library has seen a steady increase in usage, currently recording more than 2,500 visits from children every month. Many children utilize the text and reference books to advance in their studies, while others simply come to experience the pleasures of

reading. The "New Arrivals" shelf, updated monthly, is the library's most popular. In the coming months, Ethiopia Reads will launch new programs in art, theater and dance, and will celebrate Ethiopian Children's Book Week in April.

Ethiopia Reads will establish libraries in six new schools in rural villages within a 150km range of Awassa, including Leku, Chuko and Yirgalem, in the coming months. Ethiopia Reads' staff, led by Ato Mashresha Kibret, will oversee the training of school staff who will be responsible for



BOOKS ON THE GO: Ethiopia Reads' donkey-powered bookmobile makes a reading stop



THREE RING DELIGHT: A good book, a best friend, and a shared stool

the day-to-day operations in these school libraries.

The Awassa Reading Center also serves as a distribution outlet for multi-lingual books published by Ethiopia Reads, as well as English-language books shipped from the United States. After a significant delay at customs, two containers of books — each containing approximately 25,000 books — were released from the port in Djibouti. The shipments was sorted and prepared for distribution by Ethiopia Reads' staff in Addis Ababa before being transported to the Awassa, adding thousands of new titles to the shelves of the Awassa Reading Center as well as the Donkey Mobile Library. Thanks to the support of

donors in the United States, Ethiopia Reads expects to touch the lives of approximately 30,000 children in Awassa and surrounding areas in the next six months.

their books much more quickly because they go by air.

Among the hundreds of book recipients are nurses, environmental health workers, youth leaders, teachers, student nurses, health centers, a park ranger, the librarian of a rural hospital, a health science college, the Clean & Green Society, lab technicians, a church pastor, a water resources office, an environment health university student doing his thesis on "Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Farmers towards HIV/AIDS," an agriculture agent, a teacher of the deaf, a health worker in a refugee camp in Tigray, the coordinator of health & HIV training at a development organization.

As great luck would have it **Lee Gallery** (Dire Dawa 64–66) is a volunteer for Hesperian, and it is her duty to fill the requests for health books from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Lee is also the one to receive the thanks from book recipients. I would like to share excerpts from one letter:

"Thank you. I really became excited because you sent 3 books. It [will] facilitate my work in minimizing health and health related problems. As you know in developing countries like Ethiopia there is high prevalence of diseases like AIDS and the like. You can imagine the importance of the Hesperian Foundation to fill the gap.

"There are a lot of believers that hear ways of spreading HIV in my village which say eating, casual contact, kissing can transmit the virus. Dear Ms. Lee Gallery. How difficult is living in this society/community. To change these beliefs it requires great effort and all concerned should be involved. About such condition I feel so much meaning when I hear them and I look at sick and neglected persons who are living with HIV and my tears run down on my face. I can write and tell a lot but I shall stop here. Because of my association with health and health related service, it is my pleasure to share the enclosed books with volunteers. . . . Therefore your donation in all aspects for me is the same as a brick is for a building. . . . I wish you a place without disease, hunger, poverty and war."

A note to PCVs

Please ask the health care workers — and teachers, and librarians — you work with to write to:

Hesperian Foundation
1919 Addison Street
Suite 304
Berkeley CA 94704 USA

and request *HIV, Health and Your Community* and any of the 13 other health books Hesperian distributes. The books are free . . . and are paid for by donations from EEE RPCVs.

HIV/AIDS Books for Rural Communities Report

Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62–64), champion of the HIV Books project reports that EEE RPCVs has received nearly \$23,000 in donations since it began in January of 2004. These funds make it possible for the Hesperian Foundation to send copies of their well-known health care books to health care workers in Ethiopia and Eritrea who request them at no cost to the requesters. And because of these funds, Hesperian is able to include with each requested book a copy of *HIV, Health and Your Community*. When the project began, it was possible to send two books for \$30 by surface mail using USPO M-bag international media mail. However, the Post Office has discontinued M-bag service due to security issues, and the cost for two books plus postage is now \$50 — the up-side of this unfortunate policy change is that the health care workers now receive

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Peace Corps Collection

(Donate your letters,
journals, etc.)
John F. Kennedy Library
Columbia Point
Boston, MA 02125
617/929-4524

THE HERALD

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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 those who replied cheerfully and promptly to our requests to write some lines for the various stories we featured this issue. It made our work lighter and the issue so much more interesting.

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; Associated Press; Reuters; BBC; Eritrea New Agency; Ethiopian Government Information Service; The New York Times; ONLF.org; Panafrican News Agency; Shaebia.com; The Chicago Tribune; 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.

com); Awate.com; Associated Press; Reuters; BBC; Eritrea New Agency; Ethiopian Government Information Service; The New York Times; ONLF.org; Panafrican News Agency; Shaebia.com; The Chicago Tribune; 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 us a note

THE HERALD is most eager to receive submissions. Our pages are open to all. Have you recently re-visited 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? All these would make wonderful articles for *THE HERALD*. Send us an email and we'll turn it into an article. We also enthusiastically welcome photo submissions.

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

Barry Hillenbrand

Email: BarryHillenbrand@Mac.com

Telephone: 202 237 5566

ETHIOPIA & ERITREA RPCVs

Name _____

Address _____

City, state, zip, country _____

E-mail address _____ Please send my subscription as a PDF to this e-mail address: YES NO

I would like my email address published on my training group web page: YES NO

Name when in the Peace Corps if different from above _____

Home phone _____ Home fax _____

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

Group # _____ Training site _____ Type of program _____

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

\$15 One-year fee for a subscription to The Herald and in, a small way, to support the work of E&E RPCVs (Not tax deductible)

\$30 Two-year fee . . .

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or

\$50 for one year to join the NPCA AND for the E&E RPCVs fee

(To save on high postage costs, international subscribers will have a full-color .pdf version of THE HERALD emailed to them. Subscribers in the U.S. may also receive their magazine via as a .pdf in lieu of a hard copy.)

Make checks payable to E&E RPCVs. Send to: E & E RPCVs, c/o Beil, 492 Staten Ave, #1003, Oakland CA 94610

You can still make a difference

To contribute to current RPCV Legacy Program projects, please use the form below.
(You can make a secure credit card donation online at eerpcv.org/legacyprogram/donate)

Name _____

Address _____

email address (please print clearly) _____

Would you like to make a donation on behalf of or in memory of another person? This recognition will appear at www.EERPCV.org. _____

Please indicate the project or projects you would like to support. Contribution amounts show what gifts can accomplish, but any size contribution is welcome and can make a difference.

Borana Student Advancement

\$35 can give 6 disadvantaged boys and girls summer advancement courses in English, math and science.

\$70 can give 12 disadvantaged boys and girls summer advancement courses in English, math and science.

\$120 can keep 1 disadvantaged girl in school for a full year.

I would like to donate \$_____ to Borana Student Advancement.

HIV/AIDS Books for Rural Communities

\$50 can give 1 rural healthcare worker 2 important reference books on HIV/AIDS and general medical care.

\$250 can provide a school, hospital or clinic with a "Healthcare Library" of 10 different health care books and 3 health care pamphlets.

I would like to donate \$_____ to the HIV/AIDS Books for Rural Communities.

I would like to donate \$_____ for a "Healthcare Library" for the following institution. (Please include name of institution, name of person to receive the books, and full address of institution.)

Ethiopia Reads in Awassa

\$30 can buy 30 high-quality, multi-lingual books for children.

\$60 can provide training materials for 3 literacy workers.

\$110 can provide two weeks' salary of a library worker.

I would like to donate \$_____ to Ethiopia Reads in Awassa.

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Please send your completed form with your check made payable to EERPCV to:

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford NY 14534-4550

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

c/o Marian Haley Beil
492 Staten Avenue, Apt 1003
Oakland CA 94610-4908

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Does it say “Expired” above your name on the address label?

Then it's time to send in your \$15 to continue to receive *THE HERALD* 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.

On the page 54 there is a form to renew.

Please continue your support of our efforts.