

The HERALD

Fall 1991 — Number 4

A publication of Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs, an affiliate of the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Decisions, decisions

Our organization began to set its direction at August conference

At the meeting of Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs during the 30th Anniversary Conference in Washington in early August over 80 assembled members made the following decisions:

- The name of the group shall be Ethiopia and Eritrea RPCVs. Votes were taken on the issue of the inclusion of Eritrea in the title, and the changing of the slash to an "and."
- The newsletter's title should be changed to "The Herald" to reflect the decision on the group name. The newsletter will be published four times a year. Three of the issues will be sent first class to dues paying members of the organization, the fourth will be sent bulk rate to the entire mailing list of Returned Volunteers from Ethiopia and Eritrea in order to: keep the mailing list current, inform all Ethiopia RPCVs of the activities of the organization, and encourage new memberships.
- There was extended discussion of the possible overlap of the roles Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs with that of Friends of Ethiopia. A brief explanation:

E & E RPCVs is an organization for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers which offers opportunities for an

active participation in support of Ethiopia and Eritrea; is affiliated with the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and is committed to its goals to support continued volunteerism and educate the people of the U.S. about the country in which we served.

Friends of Ethiopia is a non-partisan organization whose goals are to maintain links with Ethiopia and Ethiopians by Americans who have lived and worked there. In January, 1991, after five years in existence the group decided to incorporate, put the organization on a more formal footing and to broaden its membership. Full membership is now available to all Americans and associate membership is open to Ethiopian citizens and other foreign nationals. It will publish a quarterly newsletter and sponsor a minimum of six lectures in the Washington area per year.

Following the meeting, Frances Fisher LaCroix, co-chair of the E & E RPCVs, wrote to the Friends of Ethiopia stating our goals, our desire NOT to compete with or supplant that organization, and inquiring if that

Continued on page 7

Peace Corps director resigns


Paul Coverdell, Director of the Peace Corps resigned September 3rd in order to seek a seat in the U.S. Senate representing Georgia. His resignation was effective October 1.

Despite urging by the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers that the next Director of the Peace Corps be a Returned Volunteer, President George Bush nominated Elaine L. Chao to replace Mr. Coverdell.

Ms. Chao, 38, has a background in business, finance and the maritime industry. She leaves the Department of Transportation where she was Deputy Transportation Secretary and the highest ranking Asian-American in the government. She holds an M.B.A. from Harvard. It is said that Ms. Chao hopes to gain foreign policy credentials at the Peace Corps which will serve her in her quest to be Ambassador to China. It is also reported that she may be interested in running for the Senate representing her home state of California. Where again, the Peace Corps experienced is seen as a plus. Ms. Chao's appointment was confirmed Oct. 8 by the U. S. Senate.

Inside

Conference review	2, 8
Water project discussed	3
Friends, Lost & found	4
FYI	5
News from the Horn	5
Peace Corps literature	6
From our mail	9
Peace Corps update	10

Look for the great gift idea symbol  Discover terrific things to give old Peace Corps friends, and friends contemplating volunteering!

Some thoughts on volunteerism, triggered by the 30th Anniversary Conference Volunteer Day

John J. Kulczycki (63-65)

The 30th anniversary conference of the Peace Corps in Washington, D. C., August 1-4, featured speeches by Sargent Shriver, Harris Wofford, Paul Tsongas, and every other politician and former politician with a connection to the Peace Corps. But in the big tent on the Mall in Washington's heat and humidity, the buzz of conversations among former Volunteers who had not seen each other since they served together in Africa, Asia, or Latin America a decade ago or more often drowned out the lesser known speakers.

Under the theme of "Continuing to Serve," the conference also treated us RPCVs to a "Volunteer Day" of so-called "Service to the Community." The typical RPCV is a generous, adventurous, out-going person. For someone who served for two years in a Third World country and values that experience enough to attend the 30th anniversary conference, the idea of reliving it by serving the needs of our society for a day has an innate appeal. Besides, we'd be working side-by-side with other RPCVs, just as years ago. Who could resist such a nostalgic trip? Thus, it came about that I and others who were PCVs in Ethiopia in the '60s came to be numbered among George Bush's Thousand Points of Light for a day in the Third World of our nation's capital.

After a pep-talk from the director of the Thousand Points of Light Foundation, we went off to our project sites dressed in our uniform tee-shirts donated by the Coca-Cola Company, which made sure that an injunction to enjoy its "classic" drink was the most prominent message printed on the shirts. We were going not only to meet the needs of the community with volunteerism but also to support the free enterprise system by advertising the product of one of America's most famous corporations!

Since the dozen or so RPCVs whom I was with had served mainly in Ethiopia, we were of course assigned to a project in the African-American community. (I wonder where the RPCVs from Asia spent the day?) This had a certain logic to it. After all, in two years in Ethiopia, we learned how to relate to the "natives." But in the end, we had little contact with the "natives" of Washington's black ghetto: our assignment was to replace the tile in the recreation room of a home for the elderly poor.

In some ways, it was a return to our days as PCVs in Ethiopia. The mostly African-American residents of the home knew of our coming and greeted us with smiles and hello's as we arrived, but then we descended into the basement to do our "service" and had no contact with them for the rest of the day. The home was also little more prepared for us than the Third-World countries we served in: someone had to go out to buy scrapers as we began to rip up the warped and broken tiles by hand.

Nor were we any better prepared for this job than when we joined the Peace Corps as mostly young, recent graduates of liberal arts colleges. This time, for all our Ph.D.s, foreign experience, fluency in a variety of languages, and years of teaching, no one had any expertise in laying tile. After we spent half the day learning by doing, a young African-American who worked elsewhere in the building came by and proceeded to tell us what we were doing wrong and show us how it should be done. In a matter of minutes, he did more than we had achieved in hours. Even so, we had to leave before the job was done, with the glue that oozed out between the tiles sticking to the soles of our shoes and on our hands and clothes, to say nothing of the sore backs and aching muscles of people no longer as

young as when they were PCVs. It is not easy to be a Point of Light.

We PCVs of the '60s responded to John Kennedy's clarion call that we ask what we can do for our country. We were attracted by the adventure, but we also had the idealism of going out to help the poor of the Third World by introducing them to the American way of doing things. Once in the field, most of us sooner or later saw the arrogance of it all. We learned far more than we taught and gained far more than we gave.

Volunteerism offers the satisfaction of giving, but only if one really makes a contribution, or accepts the illusion of having done so. As a specialist in Eastern Europe, our tile-laying project reminded me less of my Peace Corps experience than of the projects Communists used to pressure students and workers into doing on weekends as proof of their "socialist consciousness." Volunteerism is not a panacea for the ills of our society. Sometimes there is no substitute for the welfare-state approach: the unemployed should be hired to lay tile at the homes for the elderly poor in our nation's capital, and new taxes on incomes over \$100,000 should pay for it.

John J. Kulczycki teaches East European history at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Reprinted from In These Times, a weekly newspaper based in Chicago.

A note from the Editor: Volunteer Day was seen by many as an overwhelming success. Over 1,000 RPCVs worked at 30 sites around Washington doing tasks designated by the host organizations. Sponsorship was necessary to provide lunch, drinks and transportation. The National Council has received letters of gratitude from Mayor Sharon Pratt Dixon and the head of the DC Department of Public Works. They also indicated a desire to work with RPCVs and the National Council to continue the program. Takoma Park, Maryland (a Washington suburb) is having their own Volunteer Day this month following the National Council model.

A sustainable water supply project proposed for Tigray

Tsegaye Hailu, geologist/hydrologist, Denver Colorado

Lois Shoemaker (62-64) learned about this water project proposal at a presentation in Littleton, Colorado. She subsequently contacted Ato Tsegaye and requested that he write about the project for the Herald. He graciously submitted the following.

USAID reports characterized the effects of the 1984-85 drought and famine in Ethiopia as catastrophic. The country's overall water supply needs were massive they would require years or decades to fulfill. And today, the drought lingers on with no significant decrease in intensity.

In May 1989, a group of professionals in Denver, Colorado, began researching the water supply problems in Tigray, one of the most severely drought-stricken areas in Ethiopia. The group subsequently formed a non-profit organization known as the Water and Sanitation Consultancy Group. (WSCG).

In February and March of 1991, WSCG sent one of its members to Tigray to assess the water supply situation first hand. The findings were far worse than anticipated. Indeed, the water supply needs in rural areas are at a crisis level. Many of the traditional sources of water within reasonable distances of the villages of Tigray have completely dried up. Water sources for other communities are severely reduced in flow, requiring long waiting periods to fill a container with half mud or sand and half water. The life of women, the traditional fetchers of water, has gotten far worse because now they have to carry the heavy clay pot containers over rock-filled, steep, mountainous trails, for as much as four to six hours.

As can be expected, all aspects of social life are impacted by the acute shortage of drinking water in Tigray. During the driest part of the year (November to April), families are split

up with the men and young boys taking the family possessions of livestock to far-off, malaria infested valleys for water and grazing while the rest of the family stays home. In some areas, whole families are forced to migrate. Community meetings and projects, such as terracing to conserve soil and water, are severely curtailed because people need more time to water the livestock and fetch water for drinking. Food can not be properly prepared because of the shortage of water, as well as the shortage of fuel wood, another scarce commodity in the region.

Some long standing traditions have not escaped the impact. On the positive side, in some of the hardest hit communities, men are helping

.....

... all aspects of social life are impacted by the acute shortage of drinking water in Tigray.

.....

their women folks in the chore of fetching water. Those who can afford the purchase price are utilizing donkeys. In some areas, mandatory feasting and mourning can only take place at the water hole rather than at home. Families in some communities refuse to wed their daughters to men who live on ridge tops. For these men, their traditional sources of water have completely dried up and they are now forced to obtain water from valleys up to 500 meters below. There is unanimous consensus among the people of Tigray that their current water supply problem surpasses any food shortage they had experienced in the past.

WSCG has just completed a comprehensive technical proposal with the object of providing a safe, adequate and easily accessible water to the rural people of Tigray. The proposal has been accepted by the Ethiopian government which will seek external funding to implement the project.

The proposal describes a plan to thoroughly address the water supply needs on both the emergency basis and a long-term, sustainable basis. Learning from the failures of past water supply projects all over the world, the proposal emphasizes enabling the beneficiaries to operate and maintain the water system once it is built. This will be done through community participation at all levels, training, establishing village level water committees to be responsible for the systems, providing decentralized and well equipped OM&R services, and providing health and sanitation education.

At the emergency level, it is proposed that the project will serve 430,000 persons at the rate of 30 liters of water per capita per day over a five year period. Most pumping will be done by hand pumps, and water will be conveyed to villages by gravity.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$27.3 million (US) — to be raised from international donors. The local contribution, in the form of labor and local materials, is estimated to be nearly \$17 million (US).

For more information about the project, please contact: Wray Witten, 1700 Lincoln Street, Suite 3900, Denver CO 80203, phone 303/861-9000, fax 303/861-9026.

Information about the project has been forwarded to our Steering Committee so that they might explore the feasibility of E & E RPCVs support for the project.

F R I E N D S

The daughter of **Alan and Susanne Boyd** (64-66) is currently a Peace Corps Volunteer. She was serving in Pakistan when the Gulf War began and the entire Peace Corps contingent was evacuated from that country. She has subsequently been reassigned to Nepal.

Sam Fisk (62-64) was married to Linda Coe May 26th.

Linton Heth (62-64) died at his home in Kingston, Ontario on August 23, 1991.

Jack Prebis, John Rex, Suzanne Siegel and Marian Haley Bell, (all 62-64) were among 26 RPCV artists whose work was exhibited in "Special Visions: Creative Works by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers," at the District of Columbia Arts Center as part of the 30th Anniversary Conference in early August.

Otho Rink (62-64) died recently of cancer.

Daryl and Dannie Russell (63-65) won the award for coming the greatest distance for the Ethiopia contingent at the 30th Anniversary Conference — they came from their home in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately we had no centerpiece to give as a prize.

Milly Taylor (65-67) has won the prestigious 1990 Coretta Scott King Award for her children's book "Road To Memphis."

Is it possible that anyone missed the Pennsylvania election results? Our own **Harris Wofford** (Director 62-64) was elected to the Senate by an overwhelming majority. Now, you not only "have a friend in Pennsylvania" — you have a friend in Washington. Congratulations Harris.

Please send your news to share with friends to the Herald.

National Council exec steps down

Executive Director Lyn Gray resigned from her position as head of the National Council as of October 31. Due to severe financial constraints, her position will not immediately be filled. Assistant Executive Director Sue Ueberhorst will temporarily handle day-to-day operations with support from members of board.

*The Peace Corps
and
the National Geographic Society
invite you to participate in
National Geography Awareness Week
Bring your Peace Corps experience to
a classroom near your home.
Show photos, wear the national dress,
play music, cook a meal
— whatever you would like
Go to a school of your choice or PC
will match you with a school
Call the PC World Wise Schools
program to participate
1-800-424-8580, x 2283*

LOST & FOUND

Lissane Yohannes from Mekelle, Tigray is looking for his former Peace Corps teachers. They are **Barbara Lenkerd** (64-66), **Walter Rathkamp** (64-66) **Richard Perry** (66-67) and **Steve ?** (67-68). His address now is:

Lissane Yohannes
P. O. Box 31268
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
☎ 610688

Kidane Araya would like to hear from his Peace Corps Volunteer teachers in **Adi Calh 1967-68**. He is now a student at the Colorado School of Mines and can be reached at:

Kidane Araya
914 19th , #20
Golden, Colorado 80401
☎ 303/279-7224

2% of the proposed U. S. bilateral aid allocations for FY92-93 is slated for the countries of India, Nepal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Benen, and Chad (\$260.3 million) — 51% for Israel, Egypt and El Salvador (\$6.3 billion)

For Your Information . . .

News from the Horn

- While in New Orleans recently discovered Barrister's Gallery at 526 Royal Street. It has an incredible array of art from the Horn of Africa. The owner is interested in buying as well as selling.

- The Association for Women in Development will have its biennial conference in Washington, D.C. November 21-24 entitled "Learning Together/Working Together: A South-North Dialogue." For more information contact: AWID, Kansas State University, 141 College Court Building, Manhattan, KS 66506-6015.

- Have you heard from Reference Press International? They are producing a directory "Who's Who in the Peace Corps." E & E RPCVs should be listed under returned Volunteer organizations. Our mailing list was NOT given to them as they requested.

- SERRV is a non-profit organization which promotes social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by purchasing and marketing their handcrafts in a just and direct manner. Items are available for retail purchase, as well as on a wholesale or consignment basis for groups and organizations to be sold for fund raisers. Call 1-800-423-0071 for a catalog.

- The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin are selling their 1992 International Calendar. ☐ Each month features a terrific color photo from a Peace Corps country, information about the country and notations about important dates in countries around the world. The calendars are available for \$8.00 each, and can be purchased in bulk for fund raising. Write Don Sauer, 2428 East Washington Ave., #17, Madison WI 53704.

- *Books of note* —

☐ **From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps** is a collection of stories by thirteen distinguished writers who were Peace Corps Volunteers (including Maria

Thomas, Ethiopia 71-73). Richard Lipez (62-64) said in his review in RPCV Writers & Readers "Story by story, this is superb and enjoyable stuff, and the variety is considerable. ... Like Peace Corps life, this valuable book packs a lot into a little space." Edited and published by Geraldine Kennedy, RPCV Liberia 62-64, the book is available from Clover Park Press, P. O. Box 5067, Santa Monica, CA 90409-5067. Send \$12.95 (CA recipients include appropriate sales tax) plus \$2.00 shipping.

☐ **Exotic Ethiopian Cooking** by Daniel Jote Mesfin contains 178 classic recipes — the result of six years of research and testing. With recipes for everything from we't to t'ej, this 317-page book which has many full-color photos is available by contacting: Ethiopian Cookbook Enterprises, 3800 Powell Lane, Suite 404, Falls Church, VA 22041. Send \$14.99 plus \$2.00 for shipping.

☐ **What You Can Do For Your Country: An Oral History of the Peace Corps**, by Karen Schwarz and published by William Morrow, shows how the Peace Corps has evolved over 30 years in response to different presidential administrations and trends in American life. It features many interviews with Volunteers from every decade of Peace Corps history. Autographed copies are available for \$23.00 by writing Troupers Books, Box 164, 61 East 8th Street, New York NY 10003.

Presidential candidate **Paul Tsongas** (62-64) has published a paper putting forth his thoughts on a variety of issues of importance to our nation entitled "**A Call To Economic Arms: Forging A New American Mandate.**" You can receive a free copy of the paper by writing: The Tsongas Committee, 2 Oliver Street, P. O. Box 4504 Boston MA 02101-4504.

Required reading

Rush to your library to read the long article on Ethiopia in The New York Times Magazine, September 22, 1991 entitled *A New Chance For a Fractured Land*. It's full of information and analysis.

Vanity Fair, November, 1991 has "The Fall of the Black Stalin," by Alex Shoumatoff. It is a flip and gossipy history of Ethiopia from Pre-history to now with special emphasis on the violent Mengistu years. The writer traveled to Ethiopia this summer with Harold Marcus, (who some of you may have come across during your PCV years).

TIME 11/4/91 has *Ethiopia: Return to Normalcy* which includes quotes from Meles Zenawi.

In August, Friends of Ethiopia published a special 8-page issue of their newsletter devoted entirely to a report written by their president, Paul Henze, who spent 5 weeks in Ethiopia this summer at the invitation of Meles Zenawi, the new President. (Henze was identified in the above mentioned NY Times article as "the station chief of the Central Intelligence Agency at the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa from 1969 to 1972.") Henze travelled extensively during his visit and "provides ... a firsthand report on the present state of the country and the program the new leaders are implementing." Write to: Friends of Ethiopia, P. O. Box 190, Cabin John, MD 20818.

Suggested reading

The 2nd quarter, 1991 (Vol 38 #2) of the Africa Today focuses on "Eritrea: An Emerging New Nation in Africa's Troubled Horn?" The entire editorial portion of the magazine is devoted to the topic and six of the book reviews relate to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In Africa Report, Sept/Oct 1991, Herbert Lewis has an article on Ethiopia entitled "Beginning Again."

While you won't find these periodicals at most news stands, you may find them at your local public library.

A SHORT PRIMER ON PEACE CORPS LITERATURE

The following remarks about RPCV writers were given by John Coyne (62-64) at the 30th Anniversary Conference

AFTER I CAME BACK FROM ETHIOPIA in the early sixties, I asked a New York editor to go out with me and she replied, "I'll have dinner with you, John, but I won't read your Peace Corps novel." Such was the fear and loathing that the publishing world had for Peace Corps books.

That editor is my wife now, the mother of my son, but after twelve years of marriage, she still refuses to read my Peace Corps novel.

While my wife hasn't changed, I am happy to say the publishing world has. Within the last few years, we have had a dozen books published about the Peace Corps experience, and all written by former Volunteers.

The interest in the Peace Corps, and my belief that PCVs do have a unique way of looking at the world, prompted me to start, with the help of another Ethiopian Volunteer — Marian Haley Beil — a newsletter called *RPCV WRITERS AND READERS*.

Recently, with the assistance of Philipines Volunteer Jo Manning, we produced a *BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER WRITERS*.

RPCVs are a literate group. We love to read. If we didn't read before going overseas, we certainly learned to read by the light of Tilly lamps and Coleman lanterns throughout the developing world.

When I came back from Ethiopia, I worked briefly in Peace Corps/Washington and I remember interviewing a Volunteer who had terminated early.

I asked him why he had come home and he leaned across the desk and whispered,

"I couldn't stand those Volunteers reading all night long!"

We not only read all night long. We also wrote.

And we have written some wonderful award winning books.

Bob Shacochis, a Volunteer in Barbados, won the American Book Award a few years ago for his collection of stories, *EASY IN THE ISLANDS*.

Richard Wiley, from Korea, won the 1986 Pen/Faulkner Award for his book, *SOLDIER IN HIDING*. This spring, Richard published *FESTIVAL FOR THREE THOUSAND MAIDENS*, about Korea. Suzy McKee Charnas, in the first group of Volunteers to Nigeria, won the prestigious science fiction and fantasy Nebula Award for her book, *DOROTHEA DREAMS*.

Milly Taylor, from Ethiopia, won the Newbery Prize for her children's novel, *ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY*.

Then there is the man who introduced the frisbee to Borneo, Kinky Friedman. Kinky writes hip mysteries set in Texas and New York. Kinky, however, is best known as a country-and-western singer. He is the composer of such country classics as "Proud to Be An Asshole from El Paso," and "They Ain't Making Jews Like Jesus Anymore."

Peace Corps writers are a funny lot. If you don't believe me, read the enormously funny *LAMENT FOR A SILVER EYED WOMAN* by Mary-Ann Tirone Smith, a Volunteer in Cameroon. Or some of the short stories in Norm Rush's collection, *WHITES*.

Norm Rush was, with his wife, the Peace Corps Director in Botswana for five years. If you ever wanted to know what the staff was doing while you were overseas — why, they were writing novels!

Volunteers are also serious about the countries where they served and have a great deal to say about America's role in the developing world. Take a look at the *EDGE OF PARADISE*, by P. F. Kluge, who was a Volunteer in Micronesia. Or George Packer's book, *THE VILLAGE OF WAITING*.

George was a PCV in Togo. Another Togo PCV, Peggy Anderson, authored *NURSE* and *CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL*. Or any of the books by Nigerian Volunteer Jonathan Kwitney, who most recently published *THE CRIMES OF THE PATRIOTS: A TRUE TALE OF DOPE, DIRTY MONEY, AND THE CIA*.

Recently Geraldine Kennedy, a Volunteer in Liberia, edited and published a collection of stories by Peace Corps writers entitled *FROM THE CENTER OF THE EARTH*. It will show you the wide range of talented writers who once were Volunteers.

BECAUSE OF THE RANGE AND TALENT OF RPCV WRITERS, our newsletter a year ago initiated awards for the best books written by former Volunteers. Our 1989 winners, for their collected works, were Paul Theroux, an early Volunteer in Malawi, who I am sure you have read, and Moritz Thomsen, who was in Ecuador — who is still in Ecuador — and is the author of what many consider the best Peace Corps book, *LIVING POOR*.

The awards are named after two RPCV writers:

- The Non-Fiction Award honors Paul Cowan, a Volunteer in Ecuador, who wrote, among other books, *THE MAKING OF AN UN-AMERICAN*. A long-time political activist and writer for the *Village Voice*, Cowan died of leukemia in 1988.
- The Fiction Award is named after the novelist and former Ethiopia Volunteer, Maria Thomas. The author of two collections of stories and a novel, Maria lost her life in August of '89, while working in Ethiopia for a relief agency. She, and her husband, also a former Volunteer, went down in the plane crash that killed Congressman Mickey Leland of Texas.

These two writers, and more than 200 other PCV writers have published books, are coming of age as literary persons with their own kind of expatriate writing. And in these books we are telling our stories of

the Peace Corps experience, and more importantly, telling of life in the Third World. A world that most Americans know so little about, or care to consider.

Recently, Bob Shacochis wrote in an interview I published, that Peace Corps writers are "torch-bearers of a vital tradition, that of shedding light in the mythical heart of darkness." "We are descendents," he goes on to say, "of Joseph Conrad, Mark Twain, of George Orwell, Graham Greene, Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, and scores of other men and women, expatriates and travel writers and wanderers, who have enriched our domestic literature with the spices of Cathay, who have tried to communicate the 'exotic' as a relative, rather than an absolute, quality of humanity."

We were all too young as writers to be in Paris during the Twenties, or to write the great WW II novel. During the Vietnam Era, we went off to make peace and not war, but after thirty years of the Peace Corps, what has emerged is a special kind of book, written from a special Peace Corps sensibility gained from living, as Geraldine Kennedy has entitled her collection, "at the center of the earth."

It is perhaps a small claim in the world of literature, this claim of ours, but as Volunteers it is ours alone to make. And in the telling of our stories of exotic lands and foreign shores not only to friends and family, but especially to strangers who know us only through the pages of our prose, we are fulfilling the Third Goal of the Peace Corps. We are bringing the world back home.

This year, the second year of our RPCV Writers & Readers Awards, I am happy to announce that the winner of the Fiction Award is Kent Haruf, a Volunteer in Turkey, who last year published his second novel, *WHERE YOU ONCE BELONGED*.

The winner of the Non-Fiction Award is Mike Tidwell who wrote about his Peace Corps assignment and life in Zaire, in his book, *THE PONDS OF KALAMBAYI*.

✉ *RPCV Writers & Readers is published six times a year, the basic subscription rate is \$12 for 6 issues. For more information and a sample copy, write us at: 330 Brooklawn Drive, Rochester, NY 14618.*

Press release from Ethiopia and Eritrea RPCVs sent to media outlets in Pennsylvania

RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS ENDORSE WOFFORD

The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Ethiopia and Eritrea have endorsed the election campaign of Senator Harris Wofford. Meeting in Washington last Saturday, the newly-organized group of about 150 former Peace Corps teachers and other aid workers in Ethiopia and Eritrea voted overwhelmingly to support the Wofford candidacy. Senator Wofford was one of the architects of the Peace Corps and was director of the first Ethiopia program from 1962 to 1964.

In voting to back Senator Wofford's bid to complete the unexpired term of the late Senator John Heinz, members of the RPCV organization spoke of Senator Wofford's depth of experience in foreign affairs, his long-term commitment to human rights, and the warm esteem in which Wofford has been held among former Volunteers since the Corps' founding. The Ethiopia and Eritrea Volunteers were in Washington for a Peace Corps 30th anniversary conference that attracted 2,500 former overseas workers from across the United States.

Senator Wofford spoke to the assembled group on Sunday at a Lincoln Memorial service. He praised the volunteer spirit that made the Peace Corps a success, and he called for a renewed commitment to solving problems at home and abroad through peaceful means.

Decisions continued

from page 1

group would like to consider joining with us and function as one group. Friends of Ethiopia has not responded.

- The group voted to endorse the candidacy of Harris Wofford (Ethiopia Director, 62-64) who is running for the Senate in Pennsylvania. Richard Lipez (62-64) volunteered to write a press release announcing the endorsement and it was sent out August 7th to the communications media throughout Pennsylvania. See column to left for the full news release.

- A variety of projects and their feasibility for group action were discussed. Those favored by the group include: lobbying for more favorable U. S. economic development policy for Ethiopia, and conservation, reforestation and environmental reclamation programs. No decisions were made, but the Steering Committee will continue to explore and develop possibilities.

- There was an interest in group travel to Ethiopia with an eye on 1993. (Are there any travel agents out there?)

In September, the U.S. State Department announced that \$22 million in emergency aid has been authorized for refugees in the Horn of Africa. A total of \$308 million has been contributed to the Horn this year.

A summary of comments made by members of the country update panel for the 30th Anniversary Conference

Dave Gurr (62-64)

The panel, chaired by Jim McCaffery (66-69), included Phill LeBel (64-66), professor of economics at Montclair State College; Dr. Tsehaye Teferra, director of the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. in Arlington, Virginia; and Dr. Fantu Cheru, professor of economics at American University in Washington.

Professor LeBel sketched out the history of Ethiopia over the past 17 years by reading and elaborating on newspaper headlines, commencing with the first announcement by the Ethiopian government of the famine in mid-November, 1973. He proceeded through the wars and famine to the liberation of Addis Ababa by the Tigrean rebels at the end of May of this year. It was an excellent way to understand what had happened since all of us were there.

Dr. Tsehaye focused on the legacies that the past 17 have left Ethiopia.

The first legacy is one of continual war.

Another is a legacy of continuous famine.

Ethiopian youth, with whom we all became so familiar as teachers, were conscripted into the Ethiopia Army at age 14. Their lives were disrupted, and in many cases, terminated. Those who survived have become ashamed of their heritage because so many have known strife and starvation.

All economic growth was disrupted by the war, and although human rights were not wonderful during the reign of H. I. M. Haile Selassie, things were much worse with the ruling Derge. Dr. Tsehaye said that life in South Africa might have been even better than under the Derge, led by Colonel Mengistu.

For the first time in history, Ethiopians became refugees and many of them live here in the U. S. now. Consequently, Ethiopia has suffered a major brain drain with many professionals, including doctors and nurses, residing and working in America. There are three to four university's worth of professors now residing here. Sadly, there is little possibility of many of these people returning to Ethiopia.

On the positive side, because of these legacies, most of the world now knows about Ethiopia and where it is located. Now Ethiopian history, culture and language are taught in many American universities and colleges. There are about 75 to 80 thousand Ethiopians. Many Ethiopians work in the private sector, as well as in the government. These people are sending money home, and this constitutes a new source of capital for Ethiopia.

And Ethiopia needs capital. Dr. Tsehaye estimated that the country is back to where it was thirty or forty years ago. There are no schools in many places and a new generation needs both education and health services. There is a need for a corps of people from many countries to adopt schools, clinics or even complete communities to help them with their needs.

Dr. Fantu, felt that the solutions to Ethiopia's problems were indigenous. Although outside help would be needed, Ethiopians must do it themselves. He felt that they faces three options, First, Ethiopians could try to

avoid the state and go to an underground economy. Second, they could build a new state. Because Ethiopia was a state of mind, not a secular national conscience, Ethiopians need to learn a new process of nation-building. A third option for Ethiopia is to recognize the limitations of the state and honestly say that they lack everything: government, an educational system, etc. There is a need to give them a chance but one cannot expect much from people who lack resources. It must be recognized that everyone is in it together, and all must continue to improvise. People still live on the average of one-half a travel day from the nearest road. Only four percent of the country has forests, a major energy and building resource. There is only \$3 million left in the government's bank account. There is a need for continuing relief for refugees, reconstruction of infrastructure and a need for time. The external debt is huge and can be serviced only by drawing down development capital. Also, there is a need for reforming the government toward a market-oriented economy. Finally, there is a need to completely reverse all of the Derge's actions. This will need to be commenced in the next six months.

Dr. Fantu concluded that Ethiopians need to have a giant Master Card; and they can either burn the cash, or use it wisely.

•••••

•

• **Our thanks —**

•

• Ethiopia and Eritrea RPCVs would like to thank the panel members, Jim McCaffery (66-69) and Russ Scoville (62-64) for organizing the country update and Nanci Stich Stern (66-68), Claire Shea (65-67) and Robert Russell (64-66) for their efforts to make the 30th Anniversary Conference a special one for us all.

•

•••••

F r o m o u r m a i l

The state of the organization

Income from dues and donations \$2742.00

Expenses

newsletter (4 issues, including an estimate on this Fall 1991 issue) 1131.60

Affiliation fees 195.00

Misc. 54.64

Total expenses 1381.24

Current balance \$1360.76

There are currently 168 members of Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs.

Thanks go to Jim Friberg, Frances LaCroix, Dick Lipez, Nanci Stich Stern, Pat Szklal, and most especially, Jack Prebis for their donations to E & E RPCVs.

I would love to contribute toward receiving current information on Ethiopia. At last I checked, Eritrea has been a part of Ethiopia for decades. As best as I can remember, we had volunteers in all Ethiopia's provinces. (In fact, it is my recollection that when I was in Ethiopia, Eritrea played a major role in the shift to communism and untold suffering to the Ethiopian people. They wanted nothing to do with Ethiopia and certainly no part of anything that came from the United States, including the Peace Corps).

The Peace Corps has always formally held the posture of non-political involvement to avoid these traps. It seems like a good policy. When I was in Ethiopia, I think the policy was to help the people of the host country, not get involved with non-productive debate of the centuries old border disputes. In my travels in Ethiopia, I would guess that nearly all the border peoples would rather have been part of a different country.

By now I guess you can see the bottom line here. If you change your

name and report on ALL of Ethiopia, I'd really like to join.

Lee Plate (66-69)

(See Decisions, Decisions, p. 1 on group's vote on this issue.)

It was a GREAT reunion! There were many people involved in pulling the event together and their efforts were just herculean. I thank them all.

The speakers and the programs were excellent. My thoughts, however, are that because it was so hot and uncomfortable in the tent, they could not be fully appreciated, nor do I think they were well attended because of the discomfort. If a large auditorium could have been used instead, it would have been better.

By my calculations a sizable amount was collected in registration fees. I'm certain it was well spent, but is it possible to get a break down of the revenues and expenses. It seems to me the National Council should provide this.

Peter Leofanti (62-64)

(These numbers aren't available yet.)

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs membership

Name _____

Address _____

City, state, zip, country _____

Name when in the Peace Corps if different from above _____

Home phone _____

Work phone _____

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

Group # and type of project _____

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

\$35 Annual Dues (which include \$20 National Council membership)

\$15 If you are already a member of the National Council

Make you check payable to :
Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

I would like work on _____

_____ for Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs.

Please send to:

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs
c/o Marian Haley Bell
330 Brooklawn Drive
Rochester, NY 14618

PEACE CORPS UPDATE

☎ 800/424-8580

Would you like to be a Peace Corps Volunteer?

There is an immediate need for math, science and industrial art teachers in Africa and the Pacific. And for teacher trainers and university teachers with a Master's degree in the fields of math, science, English, and elementary ed. And for teachers of the blind, hearing-impaired or with physical, emotional or mental disabilities. The readjustment allowance is now a whopping \$5,400 and Peace Corps includes former Volunteers on its list of those encouraged to apply. ☎ 202/606-3000 ext. 892.

There are currently nearly 6,000 PCVs serving in 90 countries.

Plans are underway — to start programs in Argentina, Mongolia, Yugoslavia, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (to help meet the needs of the people in this time of "transition to freedom, democracy and a market economy"); to return to Chile; and to explore possibilities in Albania, Djibouti, and Ukraine. Recently Volunteers have been withdrawn from Zaire and Haiti.

Health care for RPCVs

The U. S. General Accounting Office has prepared a report entitled "Peace Corps: Long-Needed Improvements to Volunteers' Health Care System" (GAO/NSIAD-91-213)

that reviews the health care system for Volunteers. In response, the Peace Corps has initiated efforts to improve assistance to former Volunteers with service-related medical conditions. Contact the GAO at Box 6015, Gaithersburg MD 20877 ☎ 202/275-6241 for a free copy of the report. Contact the Peace Corps for service-related medical problems.

Gifts-in-kind

The Peace Corps maintains an ongoing gift in kind program to meet requests for specific materials and equipment to support programs operated by Peace Corps Volunteer. If you can help, call the Peace Corps. The current requests include:

50 dictionaries	Chad, Equatorial Guinea
manual duplicating machines	Kenya, Jamaica
water test kits	Nepal, Honduras
child development toys	Thailand
sports equipment	Burundi, Dominican Republic, Sierra Leone
cassette recorders	Bulgaria
all-terrain bikes	Cameroon, Benin

The Herald: editing, production - Marian Haley Beil (62-64); contributing - John Coyne (62-64), Dave Gurr (62-64), John Kulczycki (63-65), Dick Lipez (62-64). Please let us hear from all of the groups.

Printed on recycled paper

Steering Committee/ Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

Contact them if you have suggestions for projects for the group, or if you would like to help them in some way.

Susan Hundt Bergan (66-68)
7144 Parman Terrace
Madison WI 53711
608/264-6032

Karen Blanchard (66-68), Co-chair
RFD 3, Box 142
Putney VT 05346
w:802/257-7751

Tom Gallagher (62-64)
3550 California St. #1
San Francisco CA 94118
415/931-9604

Frances LaCroix (62-64), Co-chair
202 Orchard Way
Richland WA 99352
509/627-0430

Richard Obermanns (68-70)
2955 Berkshire Road
Clevelena Heights OH 44118
216/371-2749

Paul Reagan (62-64)
P. O. Box 211
Staatsburg NY 12580
914/876-8705

Sarah Samuel (66-68)
903 Farley Court
Vienna VA 22180
703/255-9171

Lois Shoemaker (62-64)
1855 East Nobles Place
Littleton CO 80121
303/7940-9647

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

c/o Marian Haley Beil
330 Brooklawn Drive
Rochester NY 14618-2925

Address correction requested