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# The HERALD

Fall 2002 — Number 26

## Borders

By Hayward Allen (Harar 62-64)

### The borders of political cartography

In mid-April, the Independent Boundary Commission in the Hague issued a 125-page, official document on the international ruling of the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both sides claimed victory. Both sides claimed fouls and violations. Both countries were reluctant to accept the rulings, but they did so reluctantly since so much rested on the Hague commission's judgment.

Within two weeks, the Eritrean government filed an official request for clarification of the UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) for peacekeeping. The news media also found anger in Ethiopia.

Within a month of the ruling, Ethiopia imposed restrictions on the movement of UNMEE peacekeepers. For one week, UNMEE personnel were denied entry to Ethiopia. It was decreed that UNMEE officials must show passports when traveling between the two countries.

Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte, a UNMEE spokesperson, said that any restriction on freedom of movement works against the principle of peacekeeping. "Any time this is denied, it imperils the operation and brings the process to a halt. We are in a very

sensitive situation right now. It is being dealt with by the Secretary-General and the Security Council," she said. "The point is we are still here. The point is that we are still talking. We are still working. It is on track."

Later, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi asked for the removal of the Dutch UNMEE commander, Major-General Patrick Cammaert because the general was "deliberately trying to humiliate" Ethiopia. Six days earlier, Ethiopia had closed its borders to all members of the UN peacekeeping forces.

Cammaert was accused of favoring Eritrea by allowing journalists to enter Ethiopia from Eritrea without proper clearance. The UN apologized for the misunderstanding subsequently. Ethiopian authorities noted that the request for Cammaert's removal was "not an ultimatum." Meanwhile, UN colleagues endorsed the general for being "well-respected and known for his neutrality," according to BBC reporter Nita Bhalla.

In a 21-page document released one month after the ruling, Ethiopia contended that the wording is ambiguous, noting that Eritrea was given territory it did not claim. "The government of Ethiopia requests that the Commission be consistent in

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UNMEE - UN Mission to  
Ethiopia and Eritrea  
  
EEBC - Ethiopia Eritrea  
Border Commission

applying its analysis of the conduct of the parties to accommodate areas lying within the boundary, which the evidence demonstrates has been consistently administered by Ethiopia.”

The Eritrean government immediately took Ethiopia to task in an Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs news release, accusing Ethiopia of impeding the peace process in various ways: refusal of UNMEE border-crossings, demands that the UNMEE commander be removed, and threats to shoot down the Commission’s aerial survey plane.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guehenno, traveled to Ethiopia and Eritrea to talk to the two country’s leaders. According to a UN spokesman, “Mr. Guehenno is in the region to take stock of the situation on the ground and see what can be done to move forward the implementation of the independent boundary commission’s decision.”

By July, Ethiopia and Eritrea had agreed to take part in a summit meeting at the Hague and the aerial mapping of the newly defined border was completed.

Speaking to the World Council of Churches, UNMEE Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila stated that the border problems of Eritrea and Ethiopia include the willingness of the people along the boundary to accept the decisions of the Hague commission. “Whether people will want to be transferred with the territory is the question.” Which citizenship do they accept? He estimates that about 10,000 families will be faced with that question.

In an effort to handle this concern and many others, an independent Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission was established. The organization has offices in Asmara and Addis Ababa, and at the end of July opened an office in Adigrat, Tigre Region, to work more closely with the lines of demarcation and movement. One of the first requests was from the commission’s president, Sir Elihu Lauterpacht, who asked that Ethiopia’s ban on Ethiopia Eritrea Border Commission surveyors along the border be lifted before the rainy season began.

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## Living on the edge

### Badme

Badme is a town that would catch no outsider’s attention. Tukels dusty and timeworn, only occasionally on a map, set along a road of no importance save to the people who live there. Of no importance — except to the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Now Badme is the topic of songs. Badme has been called the source of war, the mother of infamy, the place where the border conflict began which claimed nearly 100,000 lives.

In May 1998, two nations collided in Badme. Eritrean fighters seized the town, Ethiopian militia took it back. What followed was a war that spanned more than 600 miles of a border that separated the two countries and lasted more than two years.

“Badme itself, a rough place to live at even the best of times, regrets all the attention,” wrote *New York Times* reporter Marc Lacey. “Residents point out the war damage that still mars the town, and they indicate the directions in which the armies advanced. Local people still tread carefully with their livestock on the town’s outskirts, since the land is full of mines.”

The independent Hague border commission “avoided putting its volatile name on the new map,” according to Lacey. Instead, a line was drawn at the point where the Mareb and Mai Ambessa Rivers merge. “Ethiopia received less land than it had desired. So did Eritrea . . .”

In an interview with BBC’s Nita Bhalla, Haile Gebre, a descendent of a longtime farming family in Badme, said “I simply don’t understand why there is confusion. We are Ethiopians, and we have been in Badme for generations. It has historically been in Ethiopia and will always remain so. We were occupied by the Eritreans for almost a year, and we don’t want them back. We are, however, the same people. Ethiopians and Eritreans are brothers, and all we want is to live with them in peace.”



The problem is, cartographically, no one can say exactly where Badme is. It is like the New England directional axiom, "You can't get there from here." Surveys on the ground cannot decide the issue. Satellite imagery has been used on the problem. Even so, it seems nobody will know where Badme is until sometime in 2003, five years after the war commenced there.

According to Bhalla, a longtime reporter of Horn of Africa stories, the official agencies overseeing the boundary resolution will not comment, from the UNMEE to the EEBC to the Organization of African Unity.

In Eritrea, President Afewerki went on national television to say that Badme would be an Eritrean town again, according to his reading of the Hague report. In Ethiopia, the same opinion is held, for Ethiopia

An *Addis Tribune* writer, Tsegaye Gebriye, posted an editorial shortly after the independent, international tribunal's judgement. He raised the question of the Ethiopian citizens' involvement in the peace process. "It is not often the case that a democratically elected government would need to directly request the consent of the public to decide on minor and major issues that affect its country... In such cases the government is elected to decide on behalf of its people. But, when the decision is of a magnitude that can irreversibly affect the country for generations to come, the government cannot have sole responsibility of determining the fate of the country."

The Badme decision inspired the editorial.

### Other towns on the border

Another border town, Zalambessa, was given back to Ethiopia by the boundary commission. No one in the town was upset by the decision, according to Tsegaye Tadesse, an Ethiopian journalist. One

businessman told him "Eritreans plundered our houses and looted our properties and carried away everything to their country. They looted water supply pipes and electric generators. We have lived in virtual darkness since we returned."

A report from the Eritrean town of Tserona reveals that what were once roofless dwellings are now covered by shining galvanized sheets. "The Ethiopians looted everything from corrugated iron sheeting to household goods," said a local official. He estimated that more than 30,000 people fled the area. Now, thanks to a UN Development Program, there are new roofs on the houses and windows, as well.

A UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (UN-IRIN) story states that 4,500 homes in the Tserona and Senafe area have been rebuilt, thanks to joint Dutch-Italian funding. Going home was inspirational for 60-year-old Lemlem Gebreyohannes, after months spent in a displaced persons camp. "I can't imagine it now. We were in a very bad situation. We had only a few grains for survival."

Ten thousand others are still displaced, "because either their villages have been completely destroyed or are under Ethiopian occupation," the report noted. Gamae, for example, was burned to the ground by occupying forces.

According to UNDP officials, Gamae, Tserona, and Senafe will be returned to their original condition. UNDP Program Officer Assefew Tewolde states that at least 1500 homes and public buildings, including schools, need to be rebuilt and electricity restored.

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## De-mining the border

On May 31, the Ethiopian government denounced the minefield maps given them by Eritrea. The maps detailed the Eritrean's minelaying process in the two-year war that began in 1998. The head of the UN Mine Action Team, Phil Lewis, said he believed the mapping of minefields was accurate. Lewis said that the Ethiopians believed the Eritrean

**U**.S. REP. Gregory W.

Meeks on the settlement  
of the border between

Ethiopia and Eritrea —

"Their decision reiterated

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maps were falsely drawn. He also noted that the UNMEE had the maps for more than a year and that Eritrea had only one requirement before releasing them: Ethiopia should show its minefield records.

Since the signing of the peace treaty between the two nations, at least 70 persons have been killed by mines and uncleared ordnance.

On June 11, Ethiopia agreed to accept the Eritrean maps as genuine. "I'm delighted...that the Ethiopian authorities have accepted 182 minefield records which will be utilized to assist with expeditious, efficient, and safer mine clearance in northern Ethiopia," Lewis said

Clearing the minefields is not without price, however. Two weeks later, another UNMEE mine expert was pleading for assistance from the international community to hasten the removal process. "We need to speed things up, but we need the assets to be able to do it, and we need the backers of donors to do it," Dave Edwards said. He pointed to one death and five with injuries already; two UNMEE people were hurt, a farmer was killed, a tractor driver injured, and two children wounded. (In early August, two young workers were killed while trying to defuse a mortar shell in Eritrea. They were working on a water-pipe installation project.)

Edwards believes the de-mining will take years, because it covers a 15-mile-wide corridor between Ethiopia's and Eritrea's current borders.

"Ethiopia is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world as a result of the many wars which have ravaged it," according to a UN-IRIN news release. "Tens of thousands of mines and units of unexploded ordnance litter both countries."

"We have got the good building blocks with the basic de-miners; we have lots of basic de-miners," Edwards said. What is needed now are dogs and equipment that rapidly identify mines to be defused. What is needed are funds to get the dogs and the equipment to the zone.

## US Congressman Meeks speaks of borders

On July 11, 2002, New York Congressman Gregory W. Meeks amended remarks on the Hague Commission's resolutions regarding the settlement of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. "Their decision reiterated the senselessness of the war by leaving the border substantially unaltered." Rep. Meeks called the Horn of Africa "one of the poorest regions of the world...[and] also one of the most strategic."

Girma Asmerom, Eritrean ambassador to the US, endorsed the congressman's remarks, adding, "Eritrea remains committed to abiding by the Hague Commission's border ruling, just as we did before the ruling, during the ruling, and now after the ruling. Even though Ethiopia continues to obstruct the demarcation process, both countries know it is time to move forward. By putting this dispute behind us, both people and both countries can move forward in an effort to improve the lives of our countries and citizens through economic development, education and new health care initiatives. I applaud the leadership of Congressman Meeks and thank him for his commitment to our region of the world."

Included in congressman's remarks:

"One of my top priorities when I came to this House was to help end conflict on the continent of Africa... There have been many wars in Africa. Some were just wars, where African peoples fought to overthrow the yokes of colonialism and systems of racism. However, other wars in Africa fall into the category of unjust and senseless wars. In the category of senseless wars in Africa, very few would top the two-year border [conflict] between Eritrea and Ethiopia, two former brothers-in-arms who once fought together against dictatorships and for the right to self-determination.

"The conflict that erupted in 1998 between the two countries was the result of a dispute over land in a barren roadless area of shrubs and desert...

"What made this war even more destructive was that these two nations, two of the poorest in the world and dependent upon foreign aid, were able to spend \$3 billion to purchase weapons to wage this war."

"The only winners in unjust wars are international arms sellers and traders. I am confident that the peoples of both nations are tired of war...I would like to challenge the leaders of both nations to understand that real power comes from leading a strong and prosperous society in a nation that is respected and able to assume its rightful place and responsibilities in the global community.

"More importantly, real security and sustainable processes of peace are not attainable simply by having defined borders and territorial integrity. In this era of globalization, well-defined borders and territorial integrity do not and cannot always guarantee security.

"Yes, borders and territorial integrity are important, but they can't prevent instability and insecurity in any nation whose citizens face poverty, health crises, and other forms of violence. Real security for any nation or society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is linked to the degree of the political, social and economic conditions, rights and opportunities of its citizens.

"[The governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea need to] recognize that it is in your national strategic interests to put a senseless war behind you once and for all, because you have real wars to wage: [wars] against poverty and HIV/AIDS...the challenges of transforming the public and private institutions and structures in the economy for development of your societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

"These are the wars which must be waged if the vision of a strong and vibrant African Union is going to be realized. An African Union...needs the Horn of Africa to be stable."

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## Other borders of concern

### Somalia

In mid-May, Ethiopian government spokespersons "vehemently denied any involvement in an attack on the Somali border town of Bulo Hawo." Somalia, however, insists that Ethiopian troops "abducted and killed a local warlord."

The Somali information minister told a French news agency, AFP, that Col. Abdirizak Issak Bihi had been hunted down and killed in Gedo Province. According to the AFP report, his relatives verified the abduction and assassination.

Ethiopia denied the capture and killing. "There are no Ethiopian troops in Somalia," a foreign ministry official told the BBC.

Another of Col. Bihi's relatives told the BBC that he was alive and safe in Ethiopia, in Sufka. Factions that were involved in the Bulo Hawo capture also verified his presence among them, "He is not killed, but the man is a prisoner of our faction, and he will face charges related to his misdeeds," said Col. Mohamed Ahmed Ali, part of the opposition to the Somali rulers.

### Kenya

According to the UN refugee organization, Somali people fled across the border to Kenya after the capture of Bulo Hawo. In response, the UN was shipping foodstuffs and medicines to the town of Mandera, Kenya. Water tanks, tents and vehicles were also to be delivered. "The Kenyan government would like the Somali refugees to go home," the BBC reported. They gave the people a deadline to return but did agree to set up a temporary camp for the thousands who fled the region.

The Somali Reconstruction and Restoration Council "a coalition of opposition warlords . . . backed by Ethiopia" has Bulo Hawo under control, the Kenyans assured those who ran away, the report stated.

## **Back to Somalia**

Two weeks later, the BBC reported that the Transitional National Government in Mogadishu is losing its "provisional" control over the country, having lost two key areas to rival warlords. The BBC's Hassan Barise said the interim government has "a fragile hold on much of the city," Mogadishu.

The absence of an official government in Somalia has existed since 1991, following the overthrow of Said Barre. Since then various warlords have commanded control over various regions of the country. Ethiopia has long been accused of training and supporting different factions that opposed the Transitional National Government group.

In late May, a group of 38 former military officers held a press conference in a Mogadishu hotel to state that their loyalty has been returned to their country and implicated Ethiopia in furthering of the conflict between opposing factions.

Maj. Abdurahman Hajji Mursal described how Ethiopia persuaded six officers and 145 soldiers to travel to Godey for a 45-day training exercise. "We were professional military men, but the Ethiopians taught us new explosive devices, such as modern landmines and their usage in fighting and terrorizing urban areas," he said. "We've been taught how to attach these explosives to high-rise buildings, bridges, and even laying them down on tarmac roads so the [group] could terrorize the entire city of Mogadishu."

The BBC reporter posits a theory that the major and his group "have not really been touched by any sort of patriotism, but instead have fallen out with the warlords and their Ethiopian backers."

According to the Ethiopian Reporter, Ethiopia denounced a decision made by the Arab League to establish an investigative committee regarding Ethiopian involvement in Somali affairs. The ministry of information sent out a press release that asserted "Some high officials in the League [are] trying to embellish their influence in the Horn of Africa by exploiting Somalia's case..."

In late June, however, Amr Musa, the head of the League said, "I would say, first of all, we are not at odds with Ethiopia or working in opposite directions. [Our] mission is to reach an understanding here in the Horn of Africa and here in Addis Ababa on the future cooperation and understanding, and not be at odds... There are a lot of interests, and they are not supposed to be contradicting interests. There could be always interests in stability, peace and security, and a clear future for the Somali people as a sovereign, peaceful country that needs to rebuild after the destruction of the past decade." It is vital, he concluded, that all the nations of the Horn work together, "since we are all in the same boat."

## **Sudan**

BBC reporter Nita Bhalla filed a story in late June describing the fighting along the Sudanese-Ethiopian border between Ethiopian forces and the Oromo Liberation Front. Ethiopian army officials told the BBC that the OLF tried to cross the border at Jikawo and were fought off. It was the second battle in two weeks. OLF-Ethiopia clashes have centered around Gidami, Wellega, as well as in Akobo, Gambella.

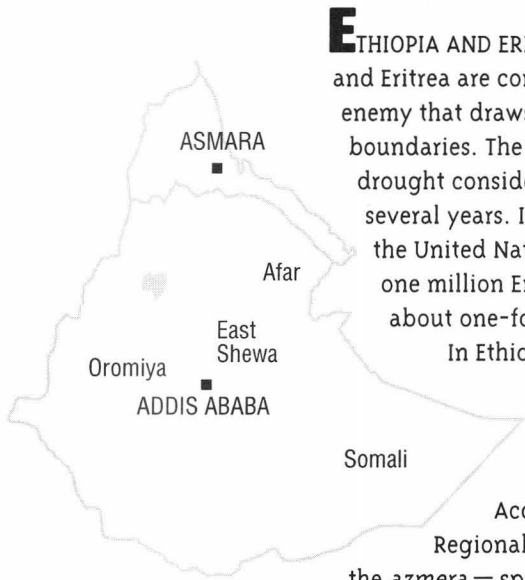
The OLF, whose objective is to set up its own state, claimed that nearly 700 Ethiopian soldiers had been killed or wounded in the various actions.

"The OLF are always lying," said an Ethiopian general. "There is no way they could have killed so many of our soldiers." He said that the army had also captured significant caches of weapons, including Kalashnikov and G3 assault rifles, grenade launchers, anti-tank landmines, and communications equipment. He accused Eritrea of providing the arms and equipment to the OLF.

The capture of several OLF soldiers, he said, revealed that they had come from Eritrea, trained at the Sawa military facility, and were former Ethiopian army soldiers who had defected.

Eritrea did not comment on the accusations in the BBC report.

# Drought Knows No Borders



**E**THIOPIA AND ERITREA ARE CONFRONTED by a climatological enemy that draws no geographical or diplomatic boundaries. The two countries are facing a drought considered by some to be the worst in several years. In Eritrea, the government and the United Nations estimate that more than one million Eritreans will be affected, or about one-fourth of the nation's population.

In Ethiopia, a half-million people have fled Afar Region; the East Shewa Region has suffered as well.

According to the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks' reports, the *azmera* — spring rains — did not come in time for planting critical, long-cycle crops. "Eritrea expects to reap virtually little crop harvest this agricultural year," the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission said. "The entirety of Eritrea's farming population will thus face the threat of serious famine disaster."

The UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia called for all aid and development organizations to institute emergency assistance plans. "The turning point occurred in mid-June when livestock started to die," the Unit noted. Food prices rose as much as 200 per cent. Another UN report stated that the drought conditions "are now starting to hit thousands of families . . . Children are showing signs of malnutrition, and death rates have soared."

"Vultures circle overhead, waiting for new prey," a UN writer described. "In the blistering 40-degree [104°F] heat and bone-dry conditions, it does not take long before another cow slumps dying to the ground."

BBC reporter Nita Bhalla wrote in early August, "Occupying some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world, the Afar people are renowned for their resilience and self-sufficiency . . . But the crisis they are now facing is far beyond even their own capabilities. . . . As you drive through the Assaiyta and Afambo districts, carcasses of cows and goats litter the desert landscapes. The stench of the rotting corpses is suffocating in the soaring heat." Even the Afar camels have trouble surviving.

The Ethiopian government estimated that between May and August nearly 200,000 cattle died in the Afar, Oromiya, and Somali Regions.

The "big rains" eventually came, but they were too little, too late.

Biruk Wolkeba, part of Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture's emergency warning committee and head of the Fentale Woreda district's office, commented that the lack of rain and demise of pastureland has reached the potential of destroying a culture's economy. He describes the Kereyu people's cattle-loss as being as high as 80 percent.

"It is very serious," he said. "The remaining cattle will die within 15 days to a month if they do not get any fodder. . . . Without cattle the Kereyu cease to exist. That is their income, that is their livelihood." After a decade of fighting drought, the people have nothing left to help them survive. The herders have evacuated to Gulcha in hopes of finding fodder from a government-run sugar plantation. Nothing is there.

Schools are closed. Villages deserted. Health centers abandoned. The price of fodder has doubled wherever it might be found (A bundle of fodder cost US\$1.30.). Biruk noted that even with the arrival of food for the cattle, it would take

many months for the herds to regain their stability. He also feared that after the rainy season, the beleaguered cattle would die of exposure from the advancing cold times.

Stories coming out of East Shewa testify to the agony of the agriculturalists and pastoralists who have seen their herds decimated by the drought. One herder described how one of his steers collapsed about 1000 feet from the Awash River. "If we can get him to the river, it might help for a day or two," Godna Jilo said. "But even by the river, there is nothing left for them. This one will probably die soon." Godna has already lost a third of his small herd of cattle, as well as more than 50 sheep.

One of the seeming conundrums of the drought's effects is the fact that the prices of livestock have fallen from about US\$60 a head to one-tenth of that. However, if the stock is reduced to skin and bones, where's the meat? Nothing is left to sell but skin and bones.

The drought has had its effects on ethnic relations, as well. There are tens of thousands of small pastoralists or herders in these regions. The Afars and the Issas, for example, are fighting each other for rights to water of the Awash, according to the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia. The conflicts have extended to groups of Ethiopians and Somalis.

Abdulmejid Hussien, from the Somali Region, told the *Addis Tribune* that such actions are longstanding, whenever there is a shortage of grass or water, or both. "It has been an issue which has been with us over generations," he said. Abdulmejid spoke of a recent meeting in Dire Dawa, where the problems of border agriculture were discussed. "Utilizing water resources that are available in good times and using several perennial rivers, particularly in the Somali Region, which are hardly used, and creating an agro-pastoralist economy would in the medium- to long-term be a good solution."

The Somali representative also commented on the allegations that the government of Djibouti has been arming Isas to fight against its rivals.

Abdulmejid said that those armed conflicts are between Ethiopians and should be resolved by the Ethiopian government and not blamed on another nation.

### **Shrinking food aid**

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has warned that the drought areas face a reduction in food aid unless more assistance is received. The Afar Region was specifically singled out in the July 29 notice on UN-IRIN.

"In many areas, wells have dried up and people are walking long distances in search of water," the WFP report stated. "Animals are further weakened by the trek."

The UN estimates that nearly six million people are affected by the drought. Planned shipments of food aid, about 115,000 tons of cereals, would only meet the August and September needs, at reduced levels. There is a shortfall, according to the WFP, of only 87,430 tons, to last through March 2003; at least 100,000 tons are needed from October through December.

According to a UN report in June, only 2.71 percent of the WFP's food aid allocations had been met.

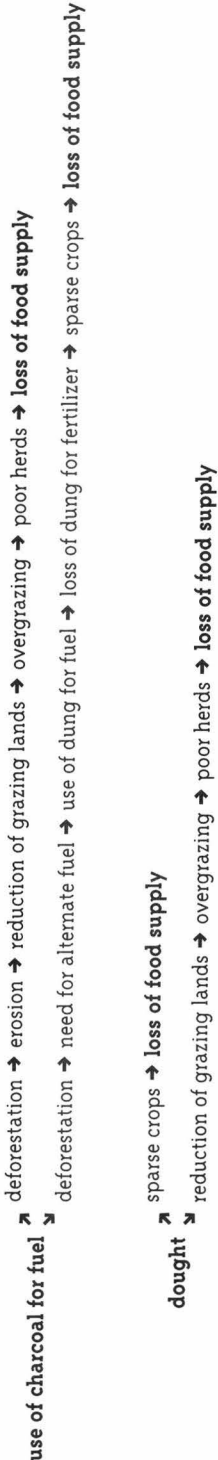
According to the USAID's Famine Early Warning System Network, Eritrea is going to "struggle to meet consumer demand for basic foodstuffs by the end of this year." Noting that Eritrea "manages to grow only 50 percent of its own food," plus the delayed demobilization of 200,000 soldiers, as well as the diminished level of foreign exchange, it spells disastrous trouble for Eritrea.

The failure of the *meher* rains greatly increases the fears of subsistence. "The rains during the first six weeks of the *meher* season have been poor in most of the traditionally vulnerable, food-insecure areas, and the consequence could be even greater food assistance needs in 2003," the UN WFP report stated.

In June, a report by the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia noted, "Good rains do not compensate for chronic food insecurity."



## Where it all ends.



Included in that report was the need to call for a ban on charcoal-making from virgin forests, which has a terrible effect on deforestation and causes catastrophic soil erosion. Due to cutting of forests there is a fuel shortage. Due to the shortage of wood, there is an increased need for alternatives, namely animal dung. With the drought affecting herd mortality, dung not only decreases in quantity but it cannot be used to fertilize fields, since it is being used as fuel. "Fertiliser is a key to improving soil fertility," a UN report noted.

So: forests are being cut down for fuel. Deforestation results in erosion. Erosion wipes out pasture and crop lands. Overgrazing subsequently occurs. Without wood, other sources must be found. Fuel is being taken from dung, usually used for fertilizing grazing grounds. The drought is decimating animal herds, thus reducing the fuel, etc. The drought is due to no water; no water for the herds, for the crops. When the rains come, they fall on bare slopes, denuded of their trees which have been cut down for charcoal.

Where does this horrible cycle end?

### **Ironic arrests**

In an ironic note, the UN has documented the imprisonment of farmers who have not paid their government loans on land improvement. They have been buying seeds and fertilizers at loan rates as high as 12.5 percent, which the UN says is higher than bank rates.

"It is just immoral and impossible to expect full repayment for the supplied agricultural extension packages from farm households that are already experiencing a food shortage," a report from the UN Emergency Unit for Ethiopia. "If part of their debts cannot be written off, they will experience even bigger problems, and it will be come very difficult for them to overcome this unfortunate livelihood situation without government support and humanitarian assistance."

## New at the E&E RPCVs website

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

Three new additions to our "Stories."

- Nyle Kardatzke's (Adi Ugri 62-64) fond remembrance of fellow Ethi 1 Bill Kerske (Adi Ugri, Asmara 62-64);
- "The Pink Eraser" by Kate Collins Faber (Arjo 95-97) recalls her first days teaching in Arjo
- Karen DeWitt (Chion 66-68) recalls lessons learned in "The Right Way of Growing Tomatoes."

## New in the E&E RPCVs library

See bottom of page 46 for how to borrow from the library:

### **Books**

*The Hospital by the River: A Story of Hope* by Dr. Catherine Hamlin, with John Little, Pan Macmillan Australia, illustrated, 308 pages (See review on Page 42.)

### **Magazines**

*Branna*, Vol 1, Issue 1 48 pages. (See page 41 for info about this new magazine.)

### **Newspapers**

"World Report: Ethiopia" 6-page supplement to the 9/24/02 *Financial Times*. Sent by Jon Wechsler (Adi Ugri 66-68)

### **Brochures**

"Socially Responsible Investing: Connecting your investments with your values" — a collection of brochures sent by Matthew Wootten (Nicaragua 96-98), who works for Morgan Stanley as a Financial Advisor, may be of interest to you.

## New E&E RPCVs Steering Committee member

Carol Mauritsen-McDonald (Harar 64-66).

Thanks for joining us, Carol.

# Eritrea News

Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62–64)

## Human rights developments

"Human Rights Watch," an independent informational organization "Defending Human Rights Worldwide," has released its report on activities and recent human rights history in Eritrea.

Most notably in HRW's summation of political actions is the observation that the 1997 edition of the Eritrean constitution carried "provisions creating civil liberties . . . but was never implemented." The reigning president, Isayas Afwerki, "governed by proclamation, unrestrained by a transitional national assembly that met infrequently . . . No electoral politics were permitted and presidential rule was essentially unfettered . . . There was no effective mechanism for questioning, much less challenging, government policy and operations."

**Editor's note:** Most of what HRW covers in its historical review has been covered in past issues of *The Herald*, including student protests, the two different groups that opposed Eritrean government actions, arrest and detention of members of the press and closing of privately-owned news media, international diplomatic reactions, etc. HRW states: "The Eritrean government tolerated the operation of only one human rights organization, Citizens for Peace in Eritrea, which strictly limited its advocacy to the rights of [1998–2000] war victims."

HRW noted the dealings between Sudan and Eritrea regarding the repatriation of a quarter-million refugees: "Under the agreement, refugees from the more recent fighting would be repatriated by the end of 2001; 160,000 would follow by the beginning of 2002." The expected numbers by the predicted dates have not been forthcoming.

"The war with Ethiopia internally displaced as many as 960,000 people," HRW reported. "At the end of September 2001, 44,000 were still living in temporary camps. Their return was hampered by fields strewn with landmines, the absence of social services in their home districts, and general insecurity along the still-disputed border with Ethiopia."

## President Isayas salutes Saddam

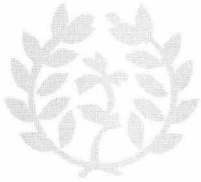
According to an Iraqi news agency, Eritrean President Isayas Afworki sent a telegram on the eve of President Saddam Hussein's 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revolution that led to his ruling Iraq. The news agency's July 18 announcement from Bagdad noted that Saddam had also received congratulatory messages from Cambodia and the Palestinian People's Struggle Front Khalid Abdul-Majeed. "In their telegrams," the agency reported, "they congratulated President Hussein, wishing him good health and happiness, and the people of Iraq more progress and prosperity. They wished that bilateral relations would witness more development in the service of the people."

## Disputing Dutch aid

The Netherlands has announced plans to increase economic assistance to Eritrea, and Eritrean-European opposition groups have protested the additional support. Chief among the opponents to Dutch aid are the Eritrean Liberation Front-RC and the Eritreans for Justice and Democracy-Benelux (EJDB).

The development aid opponents cite the Netherlands' "breaking ranks of the countries of the European Union in their unflinching demand for the minimum respect of . . . fundamental rights by the Eritrean government," the EJDB stated in a story filed at Afrol.com.

The Dutch assistance addresses port reconstruction, salt mining, and fish exports. The Netherlands government, who are playing a key role in the UN peacekeeping force along the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, has stated that assistance is important to the stabilization and peace process in Eritrea.



According to Eveline Herfkens, minister for development assistance, Dutch cooperation "is based upon two pillars: the durable fight against poverty and the furtherance of international peace, security and stability." She also noted that "further isolation of the Asmara government . . . may have negative implications on the peace process [and] . . . domestic developments may influence the peace process and vice-versa."

The Eritrean-European opposition did not assert an opposition to "friendly aid that might remain . . . on the ground of the benefit to our people," said Ahmed Nasser, EJDB chairman. "Nonetheless, such aid must be seen in the context of the prevalent political reality so that to score its objectives properly. Otherwise, dictatorial regimes would utilize any aid to consolidate their suppressive instruments to elongate the time of their continuity on the helm of power."

### **Diplomatic departures**

Continuing a trend of defections by Eritrean diplomats, three more officials have resigned from service in protest of current governmental and power politics. The consul general of the Eritrean embassy in Nigeria, the consul general in China, and the first secretary in Denmark, have left their posts. "[It] is the individuals' belief that the leadership of the ruling party, People's Front for Democracy and Justice, has abandoned the Front's principles of collective and consensus leadership in favor of one-man rule," *awate.com*, an Eritrean website opposed to the government commented.

Their diplomatic departures follow those of Eritrea's UN representative, the ambassadors and key staff to Nigeria, the Scandinavian countries, Brussels, the Netherlands, Germany, and Eritrea itself.

According to the report, there have been demotions and arrests within the Eritrean government, ranging from Haile Weldensae's demotion as foreign minister to that of minister of trade and industry to the arrest of the head of the Middle East department, Hamid Hamid.

### **Dear Secretary Powell . . .**

"We, the representatives of the Eritrean-American community and Eritrean residents across the United States, are out in front of the U.S. Department of State today to express our strong support for Eritrea's relentless struggle against terrorism and terrorists — be it of the Eritrean Jihadist variety or their collaborators who come in different disguises."

This statement was issued at a rally held in front of the State Department in late July by "The Defense and Development Committee" of Eritrean-American group. In the letter to Colin Powell, several assertions were made:

"Eritrea has been fighting these terrorists for more than ten years, and Bin Laden's first target for his model of an Islamic fundamentalist state was this religiously and ethnically diverse East African nation. The Eritrean Jihad Movement and the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement were among the first al-Qaida affiliated groups Bin Laden established in the Horn of Africa when he was operating out of neighboring Sudan in the mid-1990s."

"We also stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Eritrea, the Eritrean government, and the Eritrean people in their fight against anyone that tries to destabilize the country, undermines its hard-won independence, or jeopardizes its sovereignty — whether the threat comes from a handful of al-Qaida terrorist operatives, enemy collaborators, or foreign agents who present themselves as Eritreans."

"Rest assured that Eritrea is a true and reliable ally in the implementation of President Bush's agenda against global terrorism, as well as his vision for Africa, as expressed in his Millennium Challenge."

### **Italy and Eritrea – friends again**

In June, Eritrea and Italy resumed diplomatic relations. Eight months earlier, Eritrea expelled the Italian ambassador for unexplained reasons. However, it was noted in *The Herald* that “the previous week [Italy’s Ambassador and European Union Representative Antonio Bandini] had protested the Eritrean government’s crackdown on political opposition and suspension of the independent press.” The resumption of diplomatic relations was announced during President Isayas’ two-day visit to Italy, where he met with Italian President Silvio Berlusconi.

In one of the more obscure reports out of Italy is the news that in June as many as 500 Eritreans were being held in detention centers in southern Italy. One hundred and fifty of the people were military draftees, who had been detained “when Italian authorities intercepted their vessel while crossing the Mediterranean Sea, off the southern coast of Italy,” reported an opposition website, *awate.com*. The Italian government subsequently enforced a new law that would deport undocumented aliens.

The fate of the detainees, the story suggested, lay in the results of a meeting between Italian President Berlusconi and Eritrean President Isayas. The diplomatic decision was to deport the civilians and soldiers. News of their fates has not yet been released.

### **Draft dodgers hunted**

In July, the BBC reported that the Eritrean government was cracking down on young men and young women who had not honored their national service commitment. “Some businesses which rely on young staff have been forced to close as their employees stay at home to avoid the soldiers [seeking them],” reported Alex Last from Asmara. “And the once-thriving night life has all but stopped. Small groups of Eritrean soldiers are now positioned on street corners, calling over young people to check their identity cards.”

Those who fail the check are often loaded onto trucks and taken to a holding center, where their credentials are authenticated; those who fail are

sent to Sawa, the Eritrean military training facility. The age-level may focus on the young, but Last notes that the range can go as high as 40-years-old. “Now, with the war apparently over,” he reports, “it is pay-back time for those who missed or dodged the call-up.”

The BBC notes that the search for draft dodgers is not limited to Asmara. “The same round-up exercise is also going on across the country.”

It is not a new experience for Eritreans, according to the reporter. National service has long been demanded of young people after graduation from high school, a two-year commitment. The draft campaign began during the recent border war. “Some people are still serving with the army five years later,” Last noted. “There has always been resistance to drafting women, especially in the rural Islamic communities, but that has now spread. The experience of some women in the male-dominated army has engendered opposition to female participation across the country.”

The “recruits” are paid \$20 per month.

There are two options: serve or hide. “In a country as small as Eritrea, with a population of 3.5 million, there are not many places to hide,” Last concludes.

### **Opposition to the summer work program**

As Eritrea began its annual student summer work project in June “clashes between the Eritrean army dispatched to conduct the round-ups of the youth and the parents of the children . . . have resulted in 12 deaths,” according to *Awate.com*. In Adi Keyh and Senafe, six parents and four soldiers died, while in Keren two deaths were tied to the protest.

The opposition website declared that the Eritrean government had “declared all military release forms null and void, as many Eritreans had begun to forge the document to avoid the compulsory service.” “You cannot move ten meters,” said one person, “without [an identification card], or even buy bread in your neighborhood shop.” Affected areas include Dekemhare, Adikeyh, Segeneiti, Senafe, Keren, Barentu, Agordat, Mendefera,

Dubarwa, Gindae, and Massawa, according to [awate.com](http://awate.com). Those arrested include mothers of teenagers and village leaders. Some villages have been emptied except for young mothers and elders, in order to avoid the compulsory enlistment.

It is the second summer of discontent. Last year, students protested after two workers died at the work project, and student union president Semere Kesete was arrested and imprisoned for fostering protest actions.

### **Student leader escapes to Ethiopia**

Semere Kesete, president of the Asmara University Student Union, escaped in August from a year-long captivity in an Asmara prison. Tigrina Radio described Semere's arrival in Ethiopia, along with one of his prison guards. They had traveled for five days on foot. They were armed with AK-47s and hand grenades.

Semere was a law student who had been arrested after making a speech at his graduation ceremony, opposing the way students had been paid for taking part in a census and "damage assessment" program. He said, in an interview from Mekele, that he had chosen Ethiopia because of "the country's impressive record in its treatment of Eritrean POWs, Eritrean army defectors, and Eritrean youth fleeing their country in protest of the regime's waves of military round-ups for national service."

### **Press suppression**

The January arrest of Eritrean journalist Simret Seyoum brings the number of imprisoned writers and editors to 14, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Seyoum was a writer and the general manager of the privately-owned weekly, *Setit*. His jailing was only confirmed in early August. The Eritrean authorities say there are "about eight" media people behind bars. Simret was captured as he tried to cross into the Sudan. Simret was a publicly recognized hero in the three decade long war of independence.

Earlier, the CPJ had reported 13 journalists were being held incommunicado. The organization was

gathering information on torture, a hunger strike held by a number of the media people, and their being held without trials.

Marc Lacey, a *New York Times* reporter, wrote an Asmara-dated story in May. Enchanted by the Italianate architecture of the capital city, Lacey was also impressed by the private news media blackout. "When Eritreans gather in cafes for their morning espresso," he wrote, "they have only bland government publications to peruse, and they dare not engage in any irreverent political banter."

"Be careful what you say," he was warned by an elderly man in one café.

The reporter noted that Eritrean officials said that the shutdown was temporary and that all that was needed to re-open a publication was to get a license, as soon as new regulations have been written. "It's like you have a restaurant in New York that doesn't have a license to serve liquor," Lacey was told by Girma Asmeron, Eritrea's US ambassador. "They have to have a license to reopen. It's a legal matter.

### **Marking Martyrs' Day**

Two BBC correspondents, Martin Plaut and Alex Last, filed contrasting stories in June regarding the remembrance ceremonies of Eritreans who died in the two-year war with Ethiopia. Plaut wrote, "Traditionally, Eritreans gather at the cathedral in the capital, Asmara, to honor their dead. And the exile community finds its own ways of commemorating their people's sacrifices. But this year could be very different for the Eritrean diaspora. A wave of arrests of senior government politicians last September, and the repression of the country's free press has left the community divided. Many Eritreans will boycott official ceremonies organized by their embassies around the world." Instead, candle-lighting events were held away from the official ceremonies.

Reporting from Asmara, Last describes the "hundreds of thousands" marching in Asmara to commemorate the deaths of those defending Eritrean freedom on Martyrs' Day eve.

### **UNHCR ends refugee status for Eritreans**

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) issued a release in May stating that Eritrean refugees were no longer at risk from war. UN-IRIN reported, "Refugee status was first granted to fleeing Eritreans in the early 1960s during their bitter war for independence, which was finally achieved in 1993." With the border war beginning in 1998, more Eritrean people fled the country.

"I believe that these two groups of refugees from Eritrea should no longer have the fear of persecution or other reasons to continue to be regarded as refugees," said UNHCR High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers. He set the deadline for ending the refugee recognition at the end of 2002.

Estimates show that about 140,000 refugees are still in eastern Sudan. Around 5,000 are in Ethiopia. UNHCR stated that more than 100,000 Eritrean refugees had already returned to their homeland. Lubbers stated, "Those found to be still in need of international protection will be able to remain in their current host country as refugees. Those who do not qualify for asylum after 2002, but do not wish to return home because of strong family, social or economic links with the host country will be expected to legalize their stay there."

Since last May, through June, 50,479 Eritrean refugees have returned from Sudan, according to the UNHCR. The 91<sup>st</sup> convoy carried 960 Eritreans from Kassala, Sudan, to Teseney, Eritrea. It was hoped that another 3,000 would be brought out before the rainy season began in late July.

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## **Health issues**

### **HIV/AIDS**

Eritrea is now facing an acceleration of HIV/AIDS, according to the UN agency dealing with the pandemic. "The trend is alarming," said UNAIDS Country Program Advisor Dominique Mathiot. "There are a number of reasons for concern, including the . . . demobilization of 195,000

soldiers, the mass movement of people that followed the last conflict, as well as the economic vulnerability of many people."

The first AIDS case was reported in Eritrea in 1988, according to the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks. By 1997, the rate of infection for Eritrea's adult population was three percent. A recent survey of soldiers raised the level to 4.6 percent; female cocktail servers was 22.8 percent. By 2001, more than 13,000 people had registered as being infected. One-fifth of that number were recorded in 2001 alone.

In 1996, AIDS was the tenth ranked cause of death in Eritrea. By 2001, it was the second leading cause of death "among patients over five years of age."

Aid for AIDS victims and their families is working, on a limited scope, according to Mathiot. "Small-scale schemes are being developed to offer help to them." These include home visits, food aid, nursing care for patients unable to go to the hospital. The Danish government has given a grant of \$350,000 to help with living standards. Local religious and community organizations are providing home-visitation and basic nursing training. There is an association for people living with HIV/AIDS. The World Food Program is offering food aid to 10,000 families affected by the disease. Eritrean entertainment and sports stars are staging radio and TV campaigns.

"ABC of Life: Abstinence, Be Faithful, and Wear Condoms" is the theme of a series of short films produced by the Eritrean Social Marketing Group as part of a government education program. The Eritrean chapter of the Red Cross is a participant in a global campaign, "The Truth about AIDS. Pass it On."

"The image of the [Red Cross] national society in Eritrea is well-positioned in the community," a spokeswoman said. "Therefore we are especially well-placed to pass on the truth about AIDS and to change perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of our community members."

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## Economic Developments

### Ports

In May it was reported by *allafrica.com* that a group of American consultants were embarking on a study to upgrade the port of Assab. "The government is hoping to attract Ethiopian and Sudanese regional and transit trade lost during the recent border conflict," UN-IRIN reported.

"It is very close to major shipping lanes and its position at the mouth of the southern Red Sea gives it a competitive edge," said Maritime Transport Director General Ibrahim Said. "It is better connected to Addis Ababa than other ports in the region and also accessible from the southern part of the Sudan. But a lot of things will need to be developed and improved."

Partly funded by the World Bank and the Italian government, a \$57 million Ports Rehabilitation Project will rebuild port facilities at Assab and Massawa. At the latter port, a container terminal has already been built, and berths have been expanded and deepened. The Netherlands is also involved in making the Massawa port authority paperwork more efficient. "At present, up to 240 [official] forms need to be filled out for every ship unloading at the port. The aim," IRIN reported, "is to reduce this number to eight to ten forms."

"Now we have reached the end of the political complications with our neighbor," Ibrahim Said said, "there is no reason why we cannot do business again. Politics may dictate for a short time, but in the end it's a question of economics."

### Re-inserting ex-soldiers

The World Bank has approved a \$60 million loan to Eritrea to help cover costs of rebuilding the nation after the end of the war. In part, the money will be used in the demobilization of 60,000 soldiers, helping them return to productive, civilian lives. The loan's life is 40 years.

The loan is part of an effort to support the Eritrean government as 200,000 soldiers are reintegrated into non-military pursuits. The plan is to re-

affiliate the soldiers in a two-year process. The total costs will be \$60 million a year, topping out at about \$200 million. The World Food Program is helping with in-kind food support, and there is a Dutch-sponsored Multi-Donor Trust Fund seeking additional grants.

Included in the program are medical screening, a "safety net" allowance, counseling, community support, micro-finance and micro-business services, public works, rural development, and construction.

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## Communications

### The Internet Cafe comes to Keren

"To me, the inauguration day of the Internet service to Keren was the day that changed radically the town's life in all aspects," Adel Abdu, 20-years-old, a student at Keren Secondary School, told *Shaebia* reporter Abdulhafiz Yassin Mohammed. "Because with a click of the mouse from Keren, you can now navigate from one document and picture to the next from all over the world."

Mohammed interviewed several people "surfing on the Internet at the Intercom Internet Café" in Keren. Forty-five-year-old Tewelde was emailing messages to relatives outside Eritrea and Sara Ahmed, who was reading a feature story in the *New York Times*.

Since June 2002, a TSE-1-Net system was installed and life has changed. "It is common to hear people in Keren of various ages talking, commenting, and sometimes making fun about a lot of the substances they saw and read on the Internet," he wrote. "It is an ocean of information . . . a flood that brings tremendous social and economic benefits."

Additionally, "Business people in Keren and potential investors can now access international markets easily through the Internet, a process that would allow them to tap into the so-called e-commerce in this era of globalization."

# Ethiopia news

*Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62-64)*

## Factions of War

### Oromo Liberation Front

In May, Melese Dayessa, a minister in the government of Oromiya Region, fled Ethiopia to seek asylum. Speaking from an un-named East African country, he told the BBC Network Africa that he left because of ethnic persecution. "The Oromo form the largest group in Ethiopia," [estimated at 30 million or 40 percent of the Ethiopian population] according to the BBC report, while the government of Meles Zenawi is formed from the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

Melese said that he found it increasingly difficult to do his job. "When you remain an Oromo nationalist, they suspect you," he said. He denied, however, any connection to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The OLF began as a political party but evolved into a revolutionary movement about a decade ago and now seeks total independence from Ethiopia.

Last year, the speaker of Ethiopia's upper chambers of parliament, Almaz Meko, an Oromo, applied for asylum in the US, stating that the Ethiopian government had "brought untold miseries and sufferings" on his people. He left after four prominent Oromos were suspended from their posts for allegedly conspiring against the government.

Also in May, an association of Oromo students at Addis Ababa University held a protest against government actions involving students in Shambu, Nekemt, Ambo, and Gedo. The governmental agency that grants permits for gatherings called the protest illegal and arrested about 250 students. It was stated that permits for demonstrations must be obtained two days prior to the event. Without the permit, any gathering is illegal. Half the students were released within the week.

Human Rights Watch protested the arrests of the students. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council has stated that five students had been shot over a two-month period. In March, a student demonstration in Shambu calling for aid to farmers, led to police firing into the crowd. "Shooting at unarmed students is a shameful misuse of government power," an HRW official said. "The Ethiopian government has to investigate and prosecute the authorities responsible for firing on the students."

In a statement released by the HRW, it was asserted, "Both the state government and federal police and the military have a history of repression and abuse, targeted mainly at Oromo intellectuals and community leaders who are viewed as sympathetic to the OLF . . . . Refugees who have fled to neighboring countries in the past decade have told of widespread use of torture and extra-judicial killings in the region."

In June, an Ethiopian news agency issued a story regarding the capture and killing of OLF "terrorists." The Ministry of Information said that the OLF fighters were "equipped by the EPLF-led "belligerent government" in Asmara to fight a proxy war and divert the attention of the people from development . . ." The ministry added that 227 of 247 individuals "deployed between Akobo and Abbo areas in the Gambella State" were captured. Twenty who tried to escape were killed.

The OLF claimed responsibility for a June bomb in Dire Dawa that exploded in an Ethiopia-Djibouti railroad building, reported the IRIN. The action, according to an OLF spokesman, was in response to "the continuing harassment of Oromo students, merchants, and farmers." The OLF has vowed not to injure ordinary citizens, only "government installations and military targets."



In July, the Ethiopian army claimed to have "completely annihilated" OLF forces in western Ethiopia. According to the BBC's Nita Bhalla, the commander of the western army said the victory cinched the defeat of the OLF in his region. He stated that the OLF had sent four battalions across Sudanese borders to "destabilize peace in the country." He cited a body count of 75 OLF dead and 523 captured, including high-ranking officers. OLF claims that many Ethiopian soldiers died in the battles that took place mainly in Abobo, Gambella, and Gidami, Oromia.

#### **BPLM and EPPF attacks**

Benshangul People's Liberation Movement and the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front announced in May that they had led a joint attack in western Ethiopia against the Ethiopian army. According to the Eritrean website Shaebia.com as reported by the BBC Monitoring Service, the BPLM and EPPF force claimed 122 Ethiopians killed or wounded, and that vehicles and arms were captured.

#### **ONLF**

The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) claimed that its armed wing fought against the Ethiopian army at Far Madow in southeastern Ethiopia, near Sheygosh, killing eight and wounding seven soldiers in one firefight. Four days later, the ONLF fought the army near Dabile, and claimed to have killed or wounded more than 30 men. The BBC Monitoring Service caught the story as it was broadcast over Radio Freedom, Voice of the Ogadeni People (RFVOP), an on-line audio site out of Somalia. RFVOP reported that in retaliation for attack, the government forces attacked Dabile civilians, killing many and taking livestock.

In a July report issued by the ONLF Information Bureau (onlf.org), the group asserted it had also attacked the Ethiopian army near the village of Marer in the Nogbed District. One day later, another attack took place at Las Dhankeyre and then at San Damer. The ONLF reported Ethiopian casualties but none of its own. Attacks also happened at Hero Gul, Dawodid, El Har, Abba Qorro, and at Gumburka Ali-Arbed in July, according to RFVOP.

The ONLF were blamed for the bombing of a hotel in eastern Ethiopia, according to Associated Press. Among the injured were a teacher from Jijiga and a tourist from Djibouti. Police were searching for a man from Degahabour in the Ogaden, who had checked into the hotel two days before the bombing; he stayed in the room where the bomb exploded. According to the AP reporter, "The government accuses the [ONLF] of being allied with the Somali al-Itihad al-Islamiya fundamentalist movement, a group identified by the United States as having close links to the al-Qaida terrorist network." According to Somali officials, the group no longer exists.

#### **SMPDUO and the EU**

The Sheko-Majenger People's Democratic Unity Organization represent the ethnic Sheko and Majenger groups in Yeki District. Last December, SMPDUO opposed election results that gave the favored Ethiopian government control of the district, part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State which is about 400 miles southwest of Addis. The election results led to demonstrations where 18 died in a clash with police and local militia, according to the European Union and reported by BBC's Nita Bhalla. Subsequent retaliation led to at least another 100 deaths as villages were razed.

These events have raised concern within the European Union (EU) after their representatives visited the area in June. Local police cited the lesser number of deaths, while the SMPDUO claim between 500 and 1,000 died. Survivors stated that there were mass graves, which, however, the EU representatives did not see. Prior to the EU delegation's visit, 269 people were released from detention, according to Bhalla.

A similar inquiry has been launched in Awassa, where another clash between demonstrators and police yielded more deaths. "We are extremely concerned about the recent uprisings in Ethiopia and the failure by the government to prevent or control them," an EU spokesperson said. "We would like those responsible for the atrocities in

## HUMAN RIGHTS

WATCH reports:

During 2001 . . . the

[Ethiopian]

government jailed

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advocates, political

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force against

unarmed civilians.

Tepi and Awassa to be prosecuted." The acting head of the Ethiopian press and information in the ministry of foreign affairs said that the government is examining the EU's request for an inquiry.

### Awassa

In May, a clash between demonstrators and the government produced deaths. Depending upon the source, the number ranges from 17 to 39. In a story filed by IRIN, Sidaman protesters gathered in Loki to march to Awassa, capital of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, to demonstrate against loss of land because of political changes. It is a charge that the Ethiopian government has denied.

"If a group of people that was five kilometers away from Awassa got to Awassa, there could have been more bloodshed," Solomon Tesfaye, the Awassa regional government's deputy chief of information. He said that the government had information that led authorities to believe that the protesters were going to loot the town. A follow-up investigation was being held, he said. He did say that economic adjustments were being made, and that some local officials were pocketing some taxes. "There was corruption. We need a professional administration." He said that the farmers did not need to worry about losing their lands. "Why should they lose their land?"

The people also feared that the capital of the region was to be moved to Aleta Wondo. Beyene Petros, of the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia and the Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Coalition and a member of the national parliament, understands the significance of such a threat, "Awassa is the economic center of the south and the kind of tax money raised and rents is much better than it would be in Aleta Wondo. So it really economic for the Sidama people." The government's proposal was to put the city under federal jurisdiction in order to collect taxes. He argues that if there were illegal things going on, it was a matter for the courts, not conversion of Awassa into a federal city. The Sidamas believe their cultural heritage was being taken from them, he said. "This is their

cultural center. They effectively built this town. Internally, it is very tense, and there is bitterness among the Sidamas, and there is a temptation for retaliation on the side of the Sidamas."

The march of 7,000 was done legally, at the start, according to people involved. However, the day before the event, there was an announcement on radio and television that permission had been denied and that any action would be considered illegal. The government asserted that arms had been found in villages and leaders had been detained. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council, however, said the march had only peaceful intentions. Its report threw the charge of responsibility of violence to the security forces and the government.

### Human rights developments, one version

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has provided an extensive explication of its interpretation of activities in 2001 in Ethiopia ([www.hrw.org/wr2k2/africa5.html](http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/africa5.html)). Covered are developments and defense of human rights, as well as what role the global community has played in the process. The report is a compendium of abuses and allegations, many of which *The Herald* has covered in past editions.

"During 2001 . . . the government jailed civil rights advocates, political rivals, students, and journalists without formal charges, and police used lethal force against unarmed civilians. In July, the foreign minister told journalists that conditions in Ethiopia were not conducive for liberal democracy. The minister of education acknowledged that Ethiopia's justice system had major deficiencies. Government agencies, she said, interfered with the judicial system."

HRW reported that among those arrested was Abate Kisho, "the former president of the province known as the Southern Nations, Nationality and People's State." Citing the Ethiopian constitution, Abata denounced his arrest as being without specific charges. This followed the arrest of former Defense Minister Siye and seven others on charges of

corruption. Abate was held on charges of corruption involving Siye contacts and contracts.

Lidetu Ayalew, an Ethiopian Democratic Party official, was arrested, then released, then re-arrested on the charge of using his mobile phone to coordinate the student protests that resulted in many deaths and detentions. The three judges who ruled that he be released were also charged with conspiring against the state.

The HRW report describes the prosecution, or lack thereof, of collaborators belonging to the Derg, the participants in the Mengistu Red Terror. According to HRW, ten years after the government was deposed, 1,181 verdicts included the acquittal of 375 people. "After a full decade, 2,200 had not been brought to trial. Since 1999, the federal government has held 1,200 individuals in Oromiya State suspected of assisting the Oromo Liberation Front. Half of those have not been charged," HRW asserts.

In its coverage of harassment and imprisonment of journalists, HRW cites an impressive list of charges made against those arrested, which included "having published an article two years earlier quoting a retired general who predicted the overthrow of the government." Two reporters were jailed "for articles written years earlier alleging corruption by church officials and at the Ethiopian Electric Power Company." Eight journalists were taken to prison "after the foreign minister complained that he had been defamed by their reports that he had had a falling out with the prime minister."

HRW notes that the Ethiopian government's announcement that the border war cost the country \$3 billion, including the post-war rebuilding process. "The country remained plagued by military threats from ethnically-based, separatist groups, especially in the Oromiya, Somali, Southern Nations, and Benishangul-Gumuz States. Armed incidents, according to HRW, are "small but deadly battles sometimes led to mass arrests of local inhabitants suspected of abetting the rebels."

### **Low on the totem pole of human development**

According to a report in the *Addis Tribune*, Ethiopia ranks 168 of 173 countries in a UN Human Development Program 2002 index. This year's theme, "Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World," deals with "the political dimension of development, political freedom, and participation as a goal or an end, and about democracy as an important means to advance social and economic progress," according to the UNDP.

The report argued that the ultimate means of human development lies in the "process of enlarging people's choices, not just raising national income." In addition, "Politics matters for human development, and . . . countries can promote human development only when they have governance systems that are fully accountable, and in which people can influence decisions that shape their lives."

The report is based upon a country-by-country assessment of trends meeting the UN's "Millennium Development Goals," which set 2015 as a benchmark for achievement in development and the eradication of poverty.

"Having freedom and opportunity to express one's views, fight for one's rights and influence decisions that affect one's life, [are] as vital a part of human development as being able to read and write," the report states. "Democracy is good in itself because it is a political order set up to guarantee people's political and civil freedoms and provides for participation of the people in decision-making."

### **It wasn't the Click and Clack Show**

Over the years, there have been many trips abroad to blighted and beknighted regions by celebrities and senators, VIPs on junkets who see little and spend lots, movies made somewhere else to represent someplace else. One of the recent wonders of the world was the international intercourse between US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and U2's Bono. The unlikely duo traveled to Africa together, to Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

### THREE THINGS

confirmed for

Treasury Secretary

Paul O'Neill during

his African trip with

Bono —

1] All people

everywhere can do

great things when

they are given the

tools and incentives

for progress.

2] Without

leadership, nothing

is possible.

3] In the right

environment focused

on growth,

enterprise, and

human development,

aid works.

On paper and in the media, it was akin to the recasting of "The Odd Couple." In fact, Bono had already earned his bones before the UN and elsewhere, testifying and speaking out on the desperate and affordable needs of international aid to the many nations out of the loops of bureaucracy and possibility. O'Neill is one of the relatively unnoticed cabinet members of the Bush Administration, yet one who is personally involved in the flow of American dollars everywhere.

The international media loved the mix of ages and cultures and politics. And that was fine by the two guys, whose ultimate goals were the gathering of information, experience, and relaying them to the larger audiences.

In Addis, CNN anchor Daryn Kagan, who had spent two weeks covering the journey, had a final interview with Bono. One of her first questions focused on what he had learned from Secretary O'Neill: "It's not really about what he taught me and what I taught him. It is about what we were both taught by the people we met. We have met people that have changed our lives in a way that we will not easily forget."

Kagan agreed and noted, "We will carry them in our hearts."

"Forget hearts," Bono said. "That is really the thing here. It is not about emotions here. You have got to be tough-minded. There are too many lives at stake, and that is actually why I like having [O'Neill] around. He is a hardheaded, hard-nosed guy, and we need that, you know. We need actually to transform the lives of these people, and we can . . . I believe if we can convince the Americans that the money won't go to corrupt regimes, and money won't be wasted on bureaucracy, I believe we can get whatever it costs, probably a half-cent on the dollar, and you can transform the lives of people living on this continent."

Kagan noted that Bono had taken "some grief" among his political friends for making the trip.

"It is pretty unhip," he answered. "It is tough. Look, it is a lot more romantic to be on the barricades with . . . a handkerchief over your face, and throwing rocks. But what I have learned is . . . these people's lives, it is too many people's lives in the balance. Millions. We have got to stop playing politics with this."

When Secretary O'Neill returned to Washington, one of his first appearances was at Georgetown University at an event sponsored by *Foreign Policy* magazine and co-sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and GU's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. [See [www.foreignpolicy.com/issue\\_julyaug\\_2002/oneill.html](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_julyaug_2002/oneill.html).]

"I went to Africa to listen and learn," he said. "I also went to find a real-world basis for recommendations to the President on how to allocate funds from the new Millennium Challenge Account. But most of all I went with an open mind and one pivotal question: How can the people of the United States and the developed world best help Africans and their elected leaders achieve prosperity at last?"

About Bono: "I did try on the famous blue shades . . . and Bono sang the occasional song. Between these lighter moments, though, I have to say this was the most intense twelve days I've ever experienced. I met people like Sister Benedicta, who runs a hospital and orphanage in Ethiopia. She maintained an incredible radiance, even as she told us how many people die in her hospital every day. To witness that strength of spirit is a truly profound experience."

He noted that he had seen signs of progress in each country he visited. But he also mentioned, "I can't begin to describe all the emotional moments of this trip. They confirmed three things for me. First a truth we've always known. All people everywhere can do great things when they are given the tools and incentives for progress. Second, that without leadership, nothing is possible. And finally, that in the right environment focused on growth, enterprise, and human development, aid works . . . Knowing it can work, we have a moral

## ETHIOPIA HAS

launched an ambitious plan to be the first in the world to eradicate the dreaded tsetse fly.

imperative to demand as much. Assistance should make a real difference in people's lives." And quoting former General and Secretary of State George C. Marshall, "With foresight and a willingness on the part of our people to face up to the vast responsibility which history has placed upon our country, the difficulties...can and will be overcome."

"We also have to defend," said Bono, "the idea of America. This is what America is about. You read the Constitution, it is a poetic thing, standing with the weak and oppressed and guarding each man's sacred honor, or whatever the phrase is. That's the America I'm a fan of. There is a lot at stake here in lives, but there is also 'back home,' a sense of people wanting to believe that again."

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## Health issues

### Tsetse fly eradication

Ethiopia has launched an ambitious plan to be the first in the world to eradicate the dreaded tsetse fly. While the species in Ethiopia do not carry the trypanosome parasite that causes sleeping sickness, it does infect cattle. In Africa an estimated one-fourth of grazing land is rendered useless due to the flies.

The plan, as discussed on *NewScientist.com* and in the *Johannesburg Mail and Guardian*, involves a process whereby swarms of male flies will be sterilized with radiation and released into tsetse regions. Since the females mate only once, it is thought that the total population will collapse as the males unsuccessfully breed.

Backed by the Organization for African Unity, Ethiopia's government entomologist Assefa Mebrate has designed a master plan and is building a special facility outside Addis, near Kaliti. The center's director, Solomon Mekonnen, says, "Within two years, the center will be producing two million [male] flies a week."

The plan is not without its critics, most notably Africa's leading tsetse expert, Hans Herren of the

International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi. He told the *New Scientist*, "We think it is a crazy idea. There are so many tsetse that you are bound to miss a few. The populations will regenerate and you are back to square one."

Scientists have located five different tsetse species in Ethiopia, and each one would have to be targeted, at an estimated cost of \$200 million. It is hoped that Ethiopia's tsetse scourge will be gone within ten years.

"Right now, two-thirds of our people are living on one-third of the land, and the biggest reason is the tsetse fly in the lowlands," said Mulugeta Amha, chairman of Ethiopia's Science and Technology Commission.

The first stage of the eradication plan is to work on a 25,000 square-kilometer region in the southern Rift Valley. "Here conventional baited traps have already cut the fly population by 95 percent around some villages," according to the *New Scientist*. "This has allowed farmers to start buying cattle for the first time since 1992, when tsetse extended its grip on the area."

The parasite the tsetse carries kills cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses. "Meaning that for thousands of years African farmers in a vast belt across the center of the continent have been unable to carry out the kind of mixed farming, using draft animals to pull ploughs and fertilize fields," writes Meek, "which gave their northern counterparts the economic advantage to conquer the world."

"You can imagine what it has meant for the continent," said Kabayo, "that you have to walk everywhere on foot, and that all farm work has to be done by hand."

The plan, according to the OAU experts, is more than breeding and releasing sterilized male insects. The first step of the plan is in the works: "millions of targets, simple rectangles of black and blue cloth stretched on stakes that fool the flies into thinking they are animals," Meek writes. "As soon as they descend on the cloth, the insects

are killed by a dose of poison. At the same time, cattle in project areas will have an anti-tsetse insecticide painted on them.”

When the existing population has been reduced to five percent, then the sterilized flies will be released. Using irradiated tsetse was used to eradicate the fly from Zanzibar in 1997.

### **HIV/AIDS**

A government health official has said that at least one-quarter-million children are living with HIV/AIDS because of the mother-child transmission. Ethiopian Health Ministry AIDS specialist Teklu Belay says that the carry-over is derived from pregnancy, delivery, and breast feeding. The agency believes that treatment provided pregnant mothers would reduce by half the number of infected children.

It is estimated that Ethiopia ranks third in populations living with the virus. Nearly three million Ethiopians are infected.

### **Anthrax**

Eastern Ethiopia is facing an anthrax outbreak. In East Shewa, eleven cases were confirmed in Fentale, according to the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia. Thousands of cattle are being immunized, according to a local agricultural ministry official, Biruk Wolkeba. “Anthrax is a problem during droughts,” he said in an IRIN interview. “It means we have to be extra careful and check the animals. If the cattle are weak from drought, which these cattle are, then this will only make the situation worse. The community knows the signs of anthrax very well and will alert us.”

Cases were discovered in Benti and Kobo, which border the Awash National Park. Biruk said that wild animals from the park, such as wart-hogs, are often the carriers.

### **A female genital mutilation story**

15-years-old, Endieyewho Asmare was speaking to a seminar on violence against women as reported by the BBC:

She was a 13-year-old girl in Assosa when she was married. “One night my husband came while I was asleep. He came with six other men and closed all the doors, including the gate. Then they picked me up where I was sleeping, held me down, and said they were going to circumcise me. I told them I was circumcised when I was a little girl...but they came at me with their knives and held me down...they just cut me up. It was really painful.”

She couldn’t stop bleeding. The men stuffed something into the wound, but the flow did not stop. “So they poured two jerry cans full of water over me and left.”

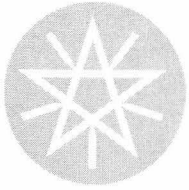
Even a week after her mutilation, she was still bleeding when her mother-in-law stopped for a visit. The woman ran to get Endieyewho’s mother, who took the girl home.

“Later, my father took me to the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association branch in Assosa, and they put me in hospital, where I stayed for one month. After a month in hospital, I was sent to a place called Mother Teresa’s Home, where I stayed for a month.”

The lawyers’ association helped her file charges against her husband. He was subsequently jailed for two days and released. Not long after his release, he went to her parents’ house with people from the Urban Dwellers Association. “He had accused my family of taking me, his wife, away,” she said. “They wanted to force me to go back, but I refused.” Now the husband’s family constantly harasses her family. “And we don’t know what to do about that,” she concluded.

“Endieyewho’s case has been dragging on for two years without a verdict,” said Emebet Olana, EWLA coordinator in Assosa. “It has further become complicated because the accused has now become the accuser.”

It is estimated that nearly three-quarters of Ethiopian girls either have been or will be genitally mutilated, since it is practiced by “nearly all Ethiopia’s ethnic groups.”



### **Medical brain drain**

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Medical Conference of the Ethiopian Medical Association was dedicated to "Brain Drain of Medical Doctors." The keynote address was delivered by Minister of Health Dr. Kebede Tadesse. He said that the government was considering proposals regarding the retention of Ethiopia's doctors put forth from the conference, and also examining reports by doctors abroad, in collaboration with the UN agencies, as to how the problem can be best addressed.

Dr. Yosef Hassen said that as many as 60 percent of the medical professionals were leaving Ethiopia to go abroad.

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## **Environmental factors**

### **Fishing**

The fish catches in the Rift Valley lakes are down forty percent from past years. A workshop in Awassa in early June did not predict the ultimate demise of Ethiopian fisheries, but, according to a story in the *Addis Ababa Daily Monitor* by Berhey W. Aregay, "It sure gave enough warnings that everything is far from okay."

Berhey reported that most of the 70+ species in the lakes are threatened. "The major culprit . . . is over fishing . . . too many fishermen," he wrote. "The lakes have become free-for-all."

"Lake ecosystems are admittedly complex," Berhey reported. "The level of research being undertaken as regards this natural system here is, perhaps, so rudimentary that we know very little of what actually goes on below the surface. So, long-term trends go undetected . . . So do episodic events . . . Freshwater ecosystems have gaps in information, most anywhere. In Ethiopia, information is hardly available."

### **Wildlife**

The Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research (IBCR) has warned that the country faces losing its rare wildlife. According to an

Institute report, at least four mammals and two bird species are facing extinction. The Wailia ibex, the Ethiopian wolf, the mountain nyala, and the Grevy zebra are facing their conclusions in the Ethiopian countryside. The institute has recorded 514 ibex, 2,000 nyala, and only 800 zebras. Experts say that at least 2500 of each species is needed to ensure survival. At least nine other "big mammal" species and 14 birds are threatened with extinction with deforestation being a primary culprit. IBCR General Manager Dr. Abebe Demisse said in an IRIN interview that it wasn't long ago when at least one-third of the country was forested. "Now the forests have been degraded to such a level that we have only 2.7 percent. . . . The bottom line is poverty really. If you alleviate the poverty scale in this country, you will definitely have an impact in terms of conservation."

### **Forests**

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has released a report on the seven global regions known for their bio-diversity, according to Ayenew Haileselassie of the *Addis Ababa Daily Monitor*. Ethiopia is cited as one of the leading areas, with a "wealth of flora and fauna. . . that could bring untold riches to the country, 'like oil is doing to the Middle East.'"

The FAO report revealed that "once upon a time" Ethiopia had a forest cover of nearly 37 million hectares. Today, according to experts the coverage ranges between three and five million hectares. Annual losses range between four and six percent of the GNP.

The greatest drain on the forests is the harvesting of firewood. Only ten percent of the demand was met, according to the FAO report. Other factors include clearing land for agriculture, absence of markets for social and environmental forestry, and minimal off-farm employment that makes timber cutting a more profitable enterprise.

There is a catch-22 aspect according to the report: "The consequences of continued decrease of the country's forest cover are the unsatisfied demand for forest products, leading to more tree-cutting;

**S**OME 72 percent of school-age children [in Ethiopia] have no access to formal education. The difference between the enrollment of boys and girls is still vast.

natural resource degradation; agricultural production decline; poverty; and ecological disruption, loss of bio-diversity, and climate change.”

The *Daily Monitor* went to Dr. Yonas Yemshaw, director of Ethiopia’s Forestry Research Center, for comments. Yonas described the lack of authority or power of his governmental bailiwick. His sector has been reduced from a ministry to a small office in the ministry of agriculture. “It’s not even a department,” Yonas reflected. Money is scarce, forest management and enforcement have been eliminated from public funding, and even the reforestation efforts of Yonas’ group has been reduced from the need for 70,000 kilograms of seeds for 71 species to a mere 10,000.

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## Education

### Focus on Primary Education in Somali State

In a story datelined from Jigiga in late July, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) tells of the troubles of Sedo Osman, a teacher who teaches in Agajin Libah twelve miles from Jigiga, and is trying to bring more young girls to school. Sedo describes how, as one of five women assigned to work in Somali Regional State, “I would like to see more girls coming to school. Gradually the situation is changing. If I am in front of the classroom, I can act as a role model to the girls. They can see that they, too, can become teachers.”

The economics of teachers, however, might delay some decision-making, for the salaries may be as low as \$21 per month.

According to a recent study cited by IRIN, “some 72 percent of school-age children have no access to formal education. The difference between the enrollment of boys and girls is still vast, despite the fact that the federal government spends 15 percent of the national budget on education. Drop-out rates from primary schools are more than 25 percent.”

Reporting from the Somali State, the statistics are even more appalling. From an estimated popula-

tion of 3.6 million, there are 800,000 school-age children (7–14 years old). Ten percent get into a school. The number of teachers in the area is 1,820 teachers, with a student-teacher ratio of one teacher per 440 students. The state has the lowest number of qualified teachers in the country. If one of sixteen girls attends school, it is considered a positive number. Somali State has the highest dropout rate in the nation, approaching one-third of those fortunate enough to be enrolled. Attendance rates advance at a miniscule two percent annually.

Teacher Sedo, 25-years-old, was given her three-month training through the Save the Children Foundation/UK (SCF), and sent to teach in “informal schools,” built by SCF, at the cost of \$2,352 per school. Sedo’s subjects are Somali language and the Koran. “If more females are educated they might be more able to support their families,” she told the IRIN. There are 77 more women in the SCF teacher training in the Somali area.

### National education goals

The national education program aims to “achieve universal enrolment in primary school by 2015,” according to the IRIN report. The 2002 goal was to almost double the numbers to seven million pupils. “The enrolment of girls is set to grow from 38 percent to 45 percent,” it was stated by an education ministry officer. “Girls often cannot attend school because they are carrying out domestic duties, such as fetching water over long distances,” IRIN notes. “UNICEF . . . tries to ensure that new schools are built close to water points and that there is access to sanitary facilities for both males and females.”

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## Business report

### The state of EAL

Ethiopian Airlines reported increased passenger loads (to a total of one million passengers) and profit in 2001–2002, according to EAL CEO Birsat Nigatu, a five percent increase in earnings from



the previous year. The airline's chief set the company's goals at a double-digit level with increased hours of flight and passengers-in-seats. He attributes his optimism to the completion of the new terminal at Addis's airport, improvement in visa processing, internet booking, and nighttime operations. A new cargo terminal and a new hangar will also add to the increased profits.

EAL employs 4000 men and women, and has 45 destinations on its flight schedule.

Bisrat has also announced that EAL will buy a dozen planes from Boeing by 2006 — six 737-700 aircraft and six 767-300. The first planes will be delivered in 2003.

In June, the BBC reported an attempted hi-jacking on a domestic flight from Bahr Dar to Addis. Security guards killed the two men, who were wielding knives, and injured a passenger and a crewmember. The plane, which carried 42 passengers, arrived safely in Addis.

### **American Trade and Investment mission visits Ethiopia**

The Ethio-American Trade and Investment Council, under the aegis of the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, led a contingent of representatives of American companies, September 14–22, to meet a wide range of Ethiopian officials of the private and public sectors. Meetings were scheduled with the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Mines, Infrastructure Development, Foreign Affairs, as well as agencies representing exports and tourism, the Ethiopian and Addis Chambers of Commerce, USAID and the US's commercial office located in the US embassy.

"It comes at an opportune time," noted the *Addis Tribune*, "where the African Growth and Opportunity Act confers very significant benefits for Ethiopia, with liberal access to the US market available to any country of region with which the US does not have free-trade agreement." Ethiopia will have access to duty-free shipments for at least eight years.

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## **Communications**

### **Conventional Amharic and the Communication Age**

The International Red Cross presented to Ethiopian President Girma Woldegiorgis the first Amharic edition of the Geneva Conventions. Two years in translation and preparation by the Ethiopian foreign ministry, the University of Addis Ababa, and the ICRC, the new 245-page edition articulates the four conventions set in 1949 regarding armed conflict. "This is an historical occasion," said ICRC VP Jacques Forster, "It is a pioneer project because it is the first time the Geneva Conventions are translated into an African national language."

### **Cyber Amharic**

"Ethiopic script has been in use since 100 BC. It is the only indigenous African alphabet still in use today," according to Laeke Mariam Demissie of the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission (ESTC). The challenge: to program the 276-letter script into computer-friendly language.

In 1991, the ESTC programmed the first translations. The biggest challenge, however, according to programmer Mesfin Belay, was not the alphabetical transformation but "rather to come up with the idea. Just as you have software in Japanese, Korean, or Arabic, there was no reason why one cannot develop Ethiopic script."

The self-proclaimed initiator of the capability is Daniel Admasse, who studied in Sweden and helped produce materials for a conference. "Some of the conference texts were in Ge'ez, the ancient language which is the ancestor of modern Ethiopian languages . . . but he found in Sweden he had no means of printing Ethiopic script," he said in a BBC interview. "I said to myself, why shouldn't I develop an Amharic computer program?" He started working on the project in 1982, working with an ESTC group. Nine years later they had the capability of teaching computer courses in Amharic, going as far as developing a Word Perfect 6.0 program in Ethiopic.

Today, there are about 35 Ethiopic software products available. The various interests in computer programming in Ethiopia has resulted in the creation of the Ethiopian Computer Standard Association and the North American-based Committee for Ethiopian Computing.

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## Social issues

### Street Kids

In late July, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, expressed its concerns about the fates of several hundred homeless children who were taken from the streets of Addis Ababa. Ibrahim Jabr, UNICEF chief in Ethiopia told the UN news service, IRIN, that he had been lobbying officials about the return of the children.

"Using these means is not going to solve the problem," he said. "These kids are going to come back . . . [It is] a minute short-term temporary solution which is visible but has no tangible effect."

Earlier, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council "accused security forces of rounding up hundreds of street children and beggars [in June] and dumping them in the Gorkfu forest, some 55km [about 35 miles] from Addis Ababa," IRIN reported.

Jabr is working on ways to help the estimated 60,000 homeless children and to improve their lives. "I don't know of any developing country that managed to solve the problem of 'streetism' by addressing the tail end," Jabr concluded. "You have to tackle the root cause."

### Camp towns being cleared

The Ethiopian government is clearing 14 camp towns that have sprung up around Addis, moving out about 17,000 campers. An estimated 57,000 people live in 53 ramshackle camps. Many of the residents fled Eritrea a decade ago. When they finally arrived in Addis they were sent to transit camps originally built by the UN to take care of Sudanese refugees.

The stories the camp residents tell an IRIN reporter are heartbreaking. A UN study reveals that 70 percent came close to dying on the long march to Addis. A small fraction arrived with possessions more than what they could carry. One-third had someone in their families die. An American researcher, Lewis Aptekar, described the suffering as terrible and praised the survivors for their tenacity and resilience.

Residents find whatever employment is available. Part-time work prevails, but some do find work at nearby factories. Still, they call the camps home, "We have no alternative to this," one dweller said, "so it is good to have something."

The Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission is trying to help by giving US\$300 grants to displaced campers. Only 3,000 of the 17,000 had received the one-time grant by the end of July.

Sadly, many who leave their home camp return. For example at the camp in Kaliti, a dozen miles from Addis, there is a sense of community. Families assist each other. Committees have been formed. The people feel as if they have a home and belong there. "We are fearful to leave," one resident said. "The money they give us will run out and we will end up on the streets with nothing. What we have here is not much, but we are safe." The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) has condemned the decision to close down the camps.

### Addis's revised Master Plan

"The revised master plan [for Addis Ababa] is a bold but practicable step to transform the living standard of the inhabitants," Mathewos Asfaw, director of the office of the Technical Committee, which has been charged with the task of creating or amending the capital's master plan for development.

"Among the problems the master plan is said to have addressed are shortage of residential quarters, waste disposal, standardization of buildings and others," according to an article in the *Ethiopian Reporter*

The committee knows it is to face opposition from those affected by the changes and fear relocation and displacement, which the officials say will only be the last resort. However, Mathewos notes that if the plan is not implemented smoothly, there might be some relocation "in nearby localities." Some sacrifices must be made, he said, but the revised master plan hopes to minimize them.

The *Ethiopian Reporter* asked Mathewos if he believes that his office's plan will succeed where others have failed. "These previous master plans, except that of the Etege Taitu one, were prepared by foreigners who had less than sufficient knowledge of the problems of the city."

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## Other stories of interest

### Aurelia E. Brazeal New U.S. ambassadorial nominee

President George W. Bush has chosen the dean of the State Department's Leadership and Management School, Aurelia E. Brazeal, to be the next ambassador to Ethiopia. She had previously served as ambassador to Kenya, and she was also posted in Tokyo and the Federated States of Micronesia.

### The Ongoing Saga of the Stolen Stele

On a Roman night last May, the infamous "Axum Obelisk" was struck by lightning. Taken from Axum at the order of Mussolini to celebrate Il Duce's fifteenth year in power and to glorify Italy's African victories, the stolen stele has occupied a prominent place in Rome, in the Piazza de Porta Capena since 1937. Located near the Coliseum, right across the road from the UN Food and

Agriculture Organization's office, the 80-foot, 3000-year-old monolith has been sought by Ethiopia for decades. Italy promised to send the historic structure but always reneged.

According to an *Addis Tribune* editorial, the lightning strike and resulting damage make the obelisk "not only a symbol of Italy's failure to honor its international obligations, but also of the gross obstinacy of the Italian political establishment."

The latter may refer in large part to Italian Under-Secretary for Culture Vittorio Sgarbi's absurd rationalizations for Italy's keeping the stele. Among them are the under-secretary's assertion that it "had become Italian by naturalization," and the government's worry at sending the statue home to "a war zone" in 1997. Thanks in part to the bolt from the black Roman sky, the former Under-secretary Sgarbi was again arguing the Axum Obelisk's fate.

In mid-June, however, the Ethiopian parliament stated that Italy was not moving fast enough and the result could be the cutting of diplomatic ties.

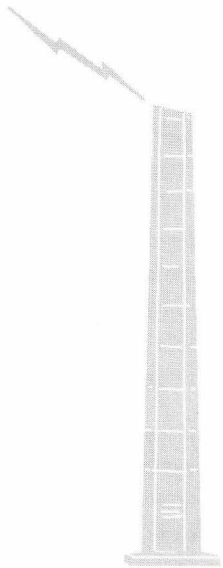
By mid-July, the Italian government, in the form of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, had assured the Ethiopian government that the stele would return to Axum as soon as it could be determined the safest way to ship it. Originally it traveled to Italy in three pieces. (An interesting theory posited by the *Tribune* editorial is that the reason the stele was struck by lightning is due to the steel rods used to hold the three pieces together. "This naturally attracted lightning.") Italian experts state that the 160-ton granite is very fragile. Sr. Sgarbi is quoted by a BBC reporter as having said, "I'm just waiting to see the obelisk disintegrate as soon as they try to chop it up to transport it back to Ethiopia."

### Home Ownership

Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia (HFHE) is involved in four housing developments in six towns. Thus far, HFHE has completed 172 homes for 860 people according to UN-IRIN.

According to HFHE statistics, ninety percent of Ethiopians live in substandard housing.

Founded on the model of a traditional building society or co-operative, a small fund is established through donors. Families are then chosen by a community committee, and those awarded assist in the construction of the house. The new owner's commitment is to repay the cost of the materials over a ten-year period. No more than one-quarter of the homeowner's monthly earnings will be obligated.



"What makes us unique," HFHE Deputy Director Brenda Ruth, "is that their money goes back into the community to build more houses, creating a sustainable fund. The houses are sold without profit, financed by affordable, no-interest loans, and use payments to build more houses."

Initially, the HFHE program was aimed at teachers and civil servants with an average income but without means to afford home ownership. It is now being redesigned to help impoverished families, as well. The HFHE homes are based upon a one-room dwelling with a corrugated roof and an outhouse; the cost averages at \$600 per unit. According to HFHE, "Families can then build additional rooms. HFHE also uses environmentally friendly locally sourced materials, thereby preventing further deforestation."

### **Mamo Wolde dies**

Long-distance runner Mamo Wolde, who stunned the track world with his marathon victory at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, died May 28, in his home at the age of 70-years-old, according to a Reuters report.

For most of the past decade, Mamo Wolde was in prison charged with the murder of a boy in the late 1970s, when he was an army officer. He maintained his innocence throughout his imprisonment.

He turned to long-distance running, inspired by Abebe Bikila, who had won the marathon at the 1960 and 1964 Olympics. The barefoot gold medalist became Mamo Wolde's trainer. "Abebe Bikila made me want to run," the protégé said in an interview. "He was my guiding light."

In 1968, Mamo Wolde ran against his mentor in Mexico City. Abebe Bikila was forced out of the race by injury, but his understudy went on to win the third gold medal won by an Ethiopian marathoner. In 1972, he won the bronze medal in Munich.

Mamo Wolde was buried next to Abebe Bikila at the St. Joseph's Cemetery in Addis.



### **Weyeyit worries or minibus taxi tremors, Etc.**

The *Addis Tribune* ran an op-ed piece in June about traffic problems in Addis. One of the issues affecting vehicular patterns and flow is that of the stop-start, passenger-pickup practices of the countless *weyeyit* or minibus taxi drivers. Seems like, just after the Wollo sefer intersection, there has been a perpetual hold-up on the road as the vehicles stop indiscriminately to pick up and drop off passengers.

Even after a special lane was built, the congestion continued; drivers didn't use the lane. "It does not take into account the naturally anarchic and lawless nature of *homo taxichaufferensis* . . . So we are back to where we started, only that taxpayers' money has been wasted."

The *Tribune* writer noted that special slip roads were also being built along the British Embassy Road, "which faces terrible traffic jams on a daily basis. All indications are that minibuses won't use these either. As an American president would say, 'It's time to kick butts.'"

The newspaper's suggestion: "On-the-spot fines for minibus drivers allergic to slip roads."

Keeping to the medical theme, the editorialist points to a peculiar and particular Ethiopian psychological problem: "pavement phobia." The situation is that "sufferers cannot bear to walk on pavements and would rather take their chances dodging cars, so one is often confronted with the strange site of roads busy with people and vehicles, lined by empty pavements [sidewalks].

School students are particularly cited as pavement phobics, since they tend to walk together, four or five abreast, down the road. The writer notes that the rainy season does provide a means of expression. "Militant vehicle drivers now have an additional weapon in asserting their road rights, water. In reprisal for pedestrian advances throughout the year, drivers can now drive through puddles near the sides of the road, showering pedestrians with sheets of muddy water."

# News of interest from elsewhere

## A chat ring in Dallas

In 2001, a DEA-coordinated task force at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport confiscated 64,000 grams of chat, a mildly stimulating plant familiar to Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in the Horn of Africa. Aka "khat" and "cot," the drug is smuggled into the US in the luggage of airline passengers. It has been found in several air hubs, like New York, Minneapolis, Detroit, and Boston.

In the past two years, according to a story in the *Dallas Morning News*, US Customs has seized more than a half-ton of chat from "mis-labeled cargo containers" at D/FW, "evidence of more ambitious smuggling enterprises," according to the North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force.

The drug has created a niche market of its own, aimed at Ethiopians, Somalis, Yemenis, and Arabs living in northern Texas. One Texas-based customs official said that finding the culprits is the task. "People make big bucks smuggling anything in. I think there's big money in everything. It all depends on what you're good at, if you've got a niche." It is said that a severe chat habit will cost a user as much as \$40 a day.

While legal in Canada and Europe, in the US the stimulant has been moved to the same category as cocaine and heroin. Although experts say it does not impair movement and yields a "mild, amphetaminelike euphoria that heightens senses and self-esteem." DEA, however, says it is addictive and "can cause aggressive behavior and feelings of paranoia..."

Editor's note: In Harar Province, there were hectares and hectares of chat being grown. In downtown Harar, the chat guys would squat or lean against the sides of buildings, chewing chat, tossing the tougher leaves into the street. There was a perpetual herd of goats in the gateway circle, chewing on chat leaves; ever see a stoned goat? And on many a flight from Dire Dawa to Djibouti, it was not unknown for passengers to get bumped off the DC-3s and C-47s for a bumper load of chat. Personally, the stuff tasted like oak leaves and packed the

punch of nausea. But then somebody said you have to build up a tolerance...

## A Coptic quarrel in Jerusalem

There was a different kind of fight in Jerusalem in July, not one that involved Palestinians and Israelis. But it was territorial conflict, nonetheless. It was religious to the core, however, as many battles in Jerusalem seem to be.

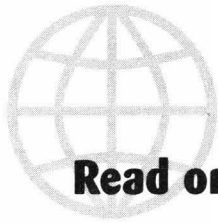
The question in conflict: who controls the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which Christians believe is the site of Jesus's burial, and resurrection. Does the power lie with the Ethiopian Orthodox priests or the Egyptian Coptic clergy? It is not a new issue to either combatant, for each has claimed control for centuries.

This fight is not the first time blood has been shed, either. "But it is one of the most serious fights in recent times," reported Alan Philips, a *London Telegraph* newsman in the Sydney (Australia) *Morning Herald*. In this fight, 11 monks wound up in the hospital, seven Ethiopian priests and four Egyptians. "One of the Ethiopians was reported to be unconscious in the hospital," Philips wrote.

"The fight erupted over the position of a chair used by an Egyptian monk near the entrance to the roof," he wrote. "He sits here to assert the Copts' claim to the rooftop, which is mainly occupied by a few African-style huts, which the Ethiopians, who have been evicted from the main church over the centuries, use as their monastery.

"On a hot day, the Egyptian monk decided to move his chair out of the sun. The Ethiopians saw this as violating the status quo, set out in a 1757 document that defines ownership of each chapel, lamp, and flagstone. After several days of rising tension, the fists began to fly on Sunday," Philips stated. "The Egyptians said their monk was teased and poked and, in a final insult, pinched by a woman."

Six denominations share the control of the Sepulchre, and one historian called it "the most unchristian place in the world."



## Read online about the Peace Corps

### Check out PeaceCorpsOnline.org

In President Bush's various initiatives, there have been announcements and pronouncements to double the Peace Corps, to lump the Peace Corps into a coalition of other service agencies called the USA Freedom Corps, and to include the Peace Corps into the Citizen Corps Terrorism Information and Prevention System (TIPS).

Each initiative has its critics and its supporters, from the Christian Century Foundation (opponent) to John Ashcroft (proponent). For *Herald* readers who are interested in the ongoing debate, an excellent source of information is <http://PeaceCorpsOnline.org> (PCOL)—“The Independent News Forum serving Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.” The information provided at this site is well-chosen, well-written and -edited, and is easily accessible on a regular basis.

For example, here is an excerpt from a fairly extensive critique by the Christian Century Foundation, a non-profit and non-denominational association that has been around for a century and publishes authoritative articles and information by the country's theologians, historians, and church leaders. It is an organization grounded in a concern for issues relating faith to political, cultural and social issues.

“What is the goal of the USA Freedom Corps when its programs address three such disparate ends: international aid (Peace Corps), homeland security (Citizens Corps), and community rebuilding (AmeriCorps and Senior Corps)? The first answer to the

“service for what” question is that the Freedom Corps initiative is attempting to stitch a seamless new entity from goals that may or may not fit together well. Imagine the different attitudes and actions of two volunteers in a local neighborhood. One is charged to promote a sense of community, the other is assigned to report on suspicious people as part of terrorism prevention...

“. . . we should express concern when Bush suggests that Peace Corps workers should go to Afghanistan and elsewhere in the ‘Islamic world’ in order to demonstrate what a great and compassionate nation America is. His rhetoric does little to convince citizens of those nations that the U.S. is not arrogant and paternalistic . . .

“. . . [The] emphasis on humility is not reflected in President Bush's call to ‘overcome evil by greater good.’ To believe that the American way (or the way of any human institution) is going to defeat evil by doing good suggests either naivete or hubris...not even Jesus accomplished this goal in his lifetime.”

### Peace Corps legislation

Two bills have been introduced in Congress. S2667 was introduced by RPCV Sen. Chris Dodd and RPCV Rep. Sam Farr presented HR4979, titled “Peace Corps Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There were 15 co-sponsors in the Senate and House, including RPCVs Tony Hall (D-OH), Michael Honda (D-CA), and Thomas Petri (R-WI).

**A**t [PeaceCorpsOnline.org](http://PeaceCorpsOnline.org), you can register to receive monthly Peace Corps news updates.

Rep. Mark Kirk subsequently introduced HR 5255, called "The Peace Corps Expansion Act of 2002." It has been endorsed by RPCVs Chris Shays (R-CT), James Walsh (D-NY), and Petri.

The Kirk bill primarily is concerned with the future Peace Corps budgets, 2003–2007, with 2007's number being \$488 million, primarily aimed at doubling the Peace Corps size.

The Dodd-Farr legislation raises the ante to \$560 million by 2007. The bill include a restatement of the Peace Corps' independence, a new reporting process to Congress on country security and student loan forgiveness, special Volunteer placement in Muslim countries, training all PCVs in global infectious diseases, the reactivation of the Peace Corps Advisory Board, an increase in monthly re-adjustment allowance from \$125 to \$275, plus \$10 million Peace Corps Innovation Fund for Third Goal projects.

PCOL suggests that "if RPCVs do nothing, the Kirk Bill will win by default."

For further current information about the legislation, go to [PeaceCorpsOnline.org](http://PeaceCorpsOnline.org)

### **Lariam and the Peace Corps**

Another worthy note from PCOL: over the past dozen years or so, many PCVs and RPCVs have said they are or have "suffered crippling paranoia, anxiety, hallucinations, memory loss, suicidal behavior, and physical ailments from seizures to vision difficulty because of the drug handed out by government doctors to prevent malaria."

The villain in the case is Lariam, also called mefloquine.

In some situations, PCVs have been med-evaced from their posts and others have been hospitalized. The Peace Corps policy: take the drug. Subsequently, many refused and exposed themselves to malarial conditions. Others have complained that even stopping does not prevent them from being affected by that which they had already taken.

**A** LLEN HOPPES len Hoppes, a 1992 PCV in Mali, said, "The Peace Corps told us if we did not want to take mefloquine, we did not want to be Peace Corps Volunteers."

## **The Peace Corps Fund**

The June 40+1 Peace Corps Conference in Washington, DC, served as a platform for the launching of the Peace Corps Fund, an organization dedicated to the provision of grants and support for RPCVs involved in programs, projects, and activities that promote the "Third Goal" of the Peace Corps.

The Third Goal is dedicated to helping Americans understand the people and cultures of other countries, thereby created a more informed citizenry, one engaged in world affairs.

The non-profit, tax-exempt foundation is not affiliated with the Peace Corps or any other Peace Corps organization. Its mission is to support community service work by RPCVs. The Peace Corps Fund is the brain-child of Barbara Ferris (Morocco 80–82) and John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62–64). Ferris and Coyne testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June.

The creation of the Peace Corps Fund has been applauded by four former Peace Corps directors, members of Congress, and members of past cabinets. Serving on the Fund's advisory board are Harris Wofford, RPCV and former secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, past PC director Mark Gearan.

Peace Corps Fund literature quotes Sargent Shriver and Loret Miller.

"Work at home as you have worked abroad," Shriver has said. "Humbly, persistently, intelligently. Serve. That's the answer, that's the objective, that's the challenge."

"[The Peace Corps] is our nation's greatest peace-building machine," Miller said, "which serves overseas and then brings it all back home."

The Peace Corps Fund website: [www.PeaceCorpsFund.org](http://www.PeaceCorpsFund.org).

# 40 + 1 revisited

## The Successes of 40+1

The National Peace Corps Association 40+1 Conference was judged by most participants to be an excellent and successful series of very different activities and programs. Here are some of the highlights and data provided by the NPCA.

More than 2000 RPCVs, former PC staff, and friends of the Peace Corps registered for the conference. They participated in more than 50 programs and activities during the five-day convocation.

1000+ people went to the Congressional Reception at the Library of Congress. Two hundred NPCA members took part in "Advocacy Day."

The opening ceremonies at the DAR Constitution Hall included Sargent Shriver, Chris Dodd, and a satellite speech from Peru's President Alejandro Toledo Manrique.

Bill Moyers hosted the Big Dinner, at which time Sarge, C. Payne Lucas, and Marjorie May were saluted and honored. The dinner's silent auction yielded \$25,000 to support RPCV service projects.

The closing ceremony began as a parade of national flags where the Peace Corps has served and culminated at Arlington National Cemetery. Harris Wofford was among those delivering remarks regarding service, sacrifice, and continuing commitment to serving others.

## The Editor's recollections of the Conference

As someone who attended the 40+1 shindig, albeit for an abbreviated time, I will testify to the conference's successes. Most important, however, to E&E RPCVs, I think, is the fact that our group was the largest in attendance, and among the most influential in the design and management of a ménage of programs. While many EERPCVs were

involved, it should be noted that without the exceptional work of John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62-64) and Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62-64), it is difficult for me to imagine filling the hole that would have been.

## Peace Corps Writers workshops

I spent a fair amount of time with the Peace Corps Writers program because it was filled with such an impressive spectrum of writers. From major literary players to self-published journal writers. For example, I sat on Dick Lipez's (Debre Marcos, Addis Ababa 62-64) travel-writers panel with Mike Tidwell (Zaire 85-87), whose articulate environmentalism overshadowed in scope, I think, we other panelists, not out of vanity, just sheer focus.

Then I had the honor of introducing writers to a fairly good-sized audience. The writer who stole the show, so to speak, was Jason Carter (South Africa 98-00), whose grandfather was once President and whose great-grandmother served in the Peace Corps, in India (67-69). Perhaps a bit more famous than our own 65-year-old PCVs Beulah and Blythe (Harar 62-64), but no less inspirational. Jason Carter joined the Peace Corps as the first person to have a great-grandmother RPCV. He went to South Africa and served on the border of Zimbabwe and South Africa. When he came home to go to law school and marry, he was encouraged to write a book about his experiences. He did and *Power Lines* was the result. Since Jason Carter represents a new generation of RPCVs, he gave us old-timers a sense of continuity and a unique ability to reflect upon experiences, as Mike Tidwell has also done, among so many RPCV writers.

## Other workshops

Among the discussion groups I attended was the HIV/AIDS session. I went specifically because of



*The Herald's* interest in HIV/AIDS but was sorely disappointed not only by the empty seats in the room, but also the fact that Ethiopia and Eritrea went unmentioned. The two countries did appear on a map, but the discussion centered on southern Africa. As I have been reminded, the focus of any discussion centers on the expertise of the speaker(s). Ethiopia and Eritrea were simply just on their maps, not in their studies. What I did glean, again, is that HIV/AIDS is a plague, not unlike the Black Death of medieval times, or cholera, or smallpox, or polio, claiming the innocent and killing entire populations of villages, towns, religions, regions, age-groups and language groups.

### **Bazaar**

Several strolls around the booksellers and the more than 230 Bazaar exhibits truly impressed me with the scope of our interests and pursuits, past and present and future. For example, I passed table #119, Pedals for Progress, before I stopped and talked with Dave Schweidenback (Ecuador 77–80), the organization's founder and president. "PfP" collects bicycles and ships them overseas. Thousands of bikes are donated annually. Think about it: "Every year, Americans buy 20 million new bicycles and discard 15 million old ones," the PfP brochure notes, "leaving many more abandoned and unused in basements, sheds, and garages."

I've got two such bikes in a yard shed . . .

In the past decade PfP has sent 50,000 bikes and \$6 million worth of parts to partner groups in 15 countries. What caught my eye in the printed matter was in "In Gear," the organization's newsletter. "Eritrea Again!" was the headline on a one-column story.

"Now that the recent border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia has ended and peace has returned to the Horn of Africa, PfP has resumed donations to the Cultural Assets Rehabilitation Program, an initiative of the Eritrean Ministry of the Environment," the newsletter notes.

Two of those truck containers, a multitude of which we see on the roads and then get stacked on

a ship, containing 834 bikes were sent in February to Eritrea, surprisingly financed by the largely unknown U.S. Department of Defense Humanitarian Shipping Program. They arrived in Asmara in May. These were not the first to go to Eritrea, for four shipments went in 1995–96, sent to postal workers, teachers, students, health workers, and micro-enterprise folks.

It turns out that the Eritrean environmental ministry is dedicated to "protecting historical monuments and sites, conserving the environment, and supporting the development of the arts, music and literature." One of the ministry's goals "is . . . seeking to reduce air pollution in Asmara. As well as generate employment, a greater use of bicycles will reduce emissions that are harming the historical monuments."

According to PfP, Eritreans have had a history of bike-riding since the Italian occupation.

Other PfP shipments have been sent to Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Mexico, Mozambique, New Guinea, Peru, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Ghana, Haiti and Honduras.

For more information on Pedals for Progress, visit [www.p4p.org](http://www.p4p.org).

### **E&E RPCVs activities**

E&E RPCVs activities were several, ranging from reunion gatherings to the Official Dinner at the Ethiopian Embassy. The embassy dinner was our most delicate diplomatic affair, it seemed. There was the threat of Ethiopian RPCVs picketing the affair, which turned out to be only a threat. People mingled and met. It was a fully-booked dinner, and the varieties of wat and injera were many. The catering service was super for the numbers seated at tables, chattering away, mingling and melding again. It was one of those reunion events one dreads but is pleased with once on location.

The comments of the Ambassador Kassahun Ayele were gracious and honest. The conflict with Eritrea was not swept aside by rhetoric but was mentioned with dignity and a certain, unexpected forthright-

**M**ORE THAN 150 RPCVs

who served in Ethiopia  
and Eritrea participated in  
activities at the 40+1  
Conference.

We had the largest  
number of registrants at  
the conference.

ness. Most importantly, was the ambassador's sincere gratitude for the contributions of the Peace Corps to the development and future of his nation. Then, we all settled into the enjoyment of the dinner, conversation and entertainment. The latter included a fascinating presentation of the Ethiopian coffee ceremony presented by LaDena Robichaud Schnapper (Dessie, Awassa 63-66) and an Ethiopian friend. During the dinner we were all delighted with showing of the wonderful slides taken by Jack Prebis (Gondar, Addis Ababa 62-64) during his service that were projected on a wall for all to see. (Slides from several others were also included, but regrettably we don't their names to thank them.)

At the end of the evening, Ninian Beall (Sodo 68-69) presented the ambassador with a beautiful framed photo that he had taken when a Volunteer of the Blue Nile Falls. The gift, a thank-you for the wonderful hospitality that the ambassador and his staff had shown our group, was graciously received.

Earlier that day, Neal Sobania (Addis Ababa 68-72) led several groups through an exhibit of Ethiopian art at the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum. Neal was co-curator of the show and provided wonderful insight into the exhibition.

On Saturday afternoon, June 22, there was a standing-room-only E/E country report at the conference. The moderator was Leo Cecchini (Asmara 62-64), and the presenters were Wayne Kessler Adi Teclesan 64-66), John Rude (Tessenie, Adi Ugru 62-64), Ted Vestal (Staff 63-65), Imre Zelleke, David Gurr (Addis Ababa 62-64), Neal Sobania, Richard Haas (Dembidolo, Addis Ababa 67-69), and Marian Haley Beil. The audience was invited to provide insight to Ethiopian and Eritrean conditions, as well.

There are people to thank for the Ethiopian and Eritrean RPCV activities. All of those mentioned above, plus: Courtney Arnold (Asbe Tefari 64-66), coordinator with the restaurant that catered the embassy dinner; Judy Smith (Asmara 63-65), coordinator with the embassy for the dinner; Gloria

Curtis (Asmara 63-65) dinner RSVPs coordinator, hat saleswoman, etc., etc; Doris Muller Goldstein (Addis Ababa 66-68) who did a wonderful and thoughtful job as coordinator of decorations for the dinner; Sarah Pentico Samuel (Ambo 66-68), roommate match-ups; John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62-64) and Clare Shea (Debre Marcos 65-67) who provided background support; Frances Fisher LaCroix (Debre Berhan 62-64) who coordinated the RSVPs for the Ethiopia 1 reunion Thursday evening that brought nearly 40 from that group together for a very joyous get-together; and Susan Hundt-Bergan (Bahr Dar 66-68) and John Pettit (Debre Tabor 66-68) who volunteered their diplomatic services.

All in all: EEE RPCVs should be proud of what their contribution to the 40+1 conference proved to be. I believe that we were able to show how the Third Goal could be asserted and demonstrated. The more than 150 EEE RPCVs who attended were not only part of the celebration, we were also a significant reason why the events were such a success.

But that's only the Editor's opinion . . .

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## And The Winners Are...

EEE RPCVs!

### Ruppe Award

Part of the celebration at the opening ceremonies of the 40+1 conference was the announcement of this year's Loret Miller Ruppe Award. The NPCA describes the award: The Ruppe Award is presented annually by the NPCA to an outstanding affiliated group for a project or projects that promote the Third Goal of Peace Corps or continue to serve host countries, build group spirit and cooperation, and promote service. The purpose of the award is not only to recognize the great work that its groups are doing, but also to generate ideas that other groups may emulate in their communities."

And the winner of the 2002 Ruppe Award was Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs "Peace Initiative" project.

The Peace Initiative was particularly impressive due to its E&E RPCVs-inspired role in the peace process that ended the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Led by Leo Cecchini (Asmara 62-64), and with the active participation of David Gurr (Addis Ababa 62-64), the Peace Initiative project drew upon its past experiences in the two countries and a continuing commitment to peace and reconciliation.

This award is the most prestigious award an RPCV group can receive, and our group is delighted to be recognized for the devoted efforts of Leo and Dave but also for those who supported the project including our members who volunteered to participate as border monitors should the need have arisen.

With the Ruppe Award, the group received a certificate and a prize of \$500.

#### **Newsletter awards**

**The Herald**, the news magazine of E&E RPCVs, was given two first prizes in the 2002 Newsletter Awards by the NPCA. Under the rubric of Country of Service/Interest Groups, **The Herald** was received First Place for editorial content — Congratulations, Hayward! — and received First Place for layout and design — Congratulations, Marian!

Other groups winning prizes for outstanding newsletters were Northern California Peace Corps Association, Minnesota RPCVs, Friends of Morocco, Friends of Burkino Faso, Amigos de Honduras, Friends of Niger, RPCVs of South Florida, San Diego Peace Corps Association. There were 23 nominations submitted for the awards.

#### **Website award**

In the NPCA competition for outstanding websites by country-of-service groups, E&E RPCVs received Second Place for its site at [www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org](http://www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org). First Place went to the Friends of Morocco site.

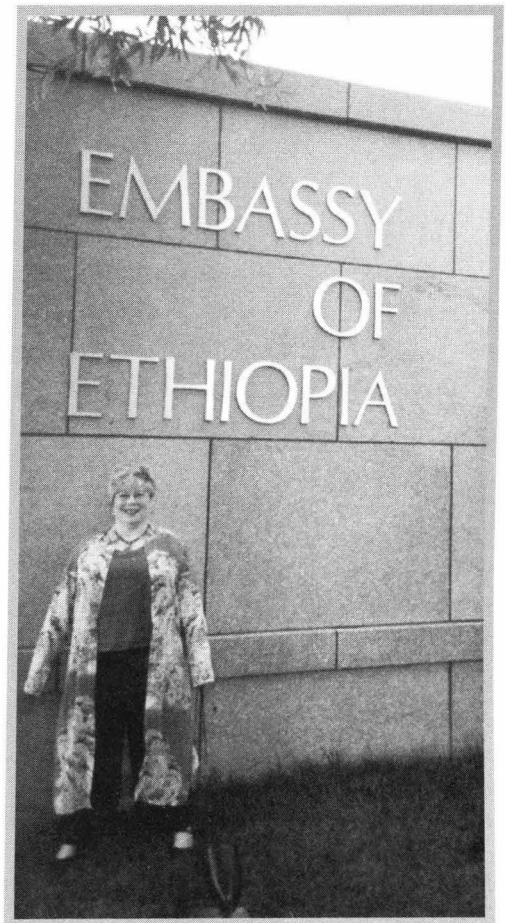
#### **Closing Ceremony**

Among the speakers at this event was Harris Wofford (Ethiopia country director 62-64). The

program include special remembrance of those Volunteers who died during their service. The program for the Ceremony listed the names of the 257 who had died while in the Peace Corps, including, from Ethiopia: William Olson, 1966; Susan Traub, 1967; James Ryan, 1972; and Roderic Turner 1973.

#### **Photos**

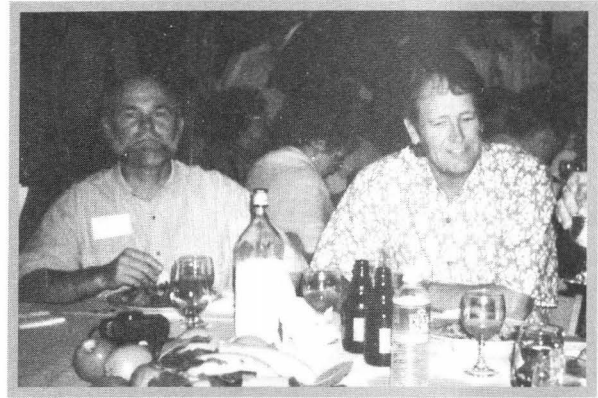
We thank Lee Atkins Desta (Addis Ababa, Debre Berhan 66-68) who sent *The Herald* photos — some of which can be seen on the next page that were taken at the dinner at the Embassy. You can find these and more at our website. Also at the site, photos from the fundraising gala, sent by Neil Boyer (Addis Ababa 62-64) — thanks, Neil.



Lee Atkins Desta



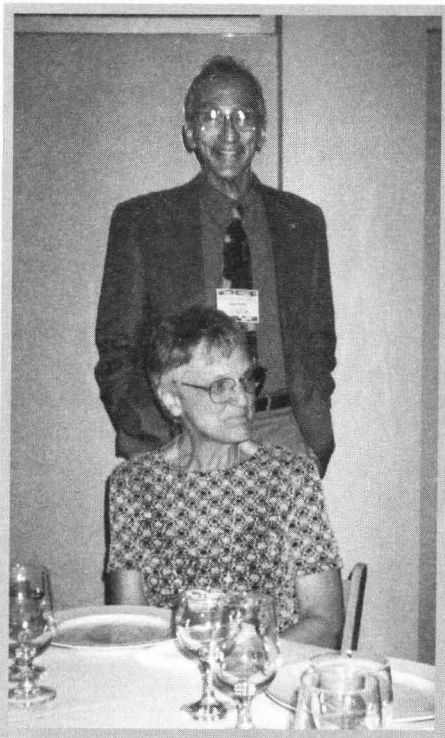
Mary Myers-Bruckenstein (Addis Ababa 68-70) and unidentified friends



Ninian Beall (Sodo 68-69) and Bryan McClure (Cursum, Dire Dawa 66-69)



Susan Hundt-Bergan (Bahr Dar 66-68) and David Hartman (Sodo 66-68)



Jack Prebis (Gondar, Addis Ababa 62-64) and Sarah Pentico Samuel (Ambo 66-68)



Susan Heck (Addis Ababa 67-69) and John Woods (Jimma 65-68)

# Dues increase announced by NPCA

This from the National Peace Corps Association:

**Beginning January 1, 2003**, Annual Membership Dues for the NPCA will increase to the following rates:

One-year individual membership (with one affiliate group): \$50

One-year couple/family membership (with one affiliate group): \$65

Three-year individual membership (with one affiliate group): \$135

Three-year couple/family membership (with one affiliate group): \$180

Additional affiliate groups may still be added for an additional \$15 individual, or \$22.50 couple/family per group per year. The current Membership Dues rates, however, will be valid for any membership or renewal postmarked by December 31, 2002.

Any member who has already renewed his or her membership in 2002 and would like to take advantage of the 2- and 3-year discounted rates is

eligible to add an additional two years to the existing membership. Members are asked to send a check clearly marked "adding two years to 2002 membership" in the memo field with another \$70 for an individual three-year membership or another \$100 for a couple/family three-year membership. Please note: only those members that have renewed their memberships during 2002 are eligible for this special two-year rate.

## Impact on YOU

Because E&E RPCVs is "joint dues affiliate," this NPCA dues increase applies to the dues for all of our members. You should know, however, that the portion of your dues that will go to E&E RPCVs will continue to be only \$15 per year. We are not increasing our dues. The NPCA increase was based on the recommendation of the NPCA Finance Committee, was approved by a majority of the group leaders attending the Presidents' Forum and was accepted by the Board of the NPCA. Note, please, that Steering Committee Chair Marian Beil, who represented E&E RPCVs at the Presidents' Forum spoke against and voted against this dues increase.

**Renew or  
extend your  
membership by  
12/31/02 to  
beat the dues  
increase!**

Membership form is on page 47.

# Friends

## Looking for . . .

Please send any contact information you might have for the following people who are being sought so that we may facilitate their reconnecting. Send to:

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

**Ludwig R. (Bob) Bachman (62-64)**

**Jon E. Eklund (Goba, Jimma 74-76)**

Joe Ciuffini (Harar 64-66) would like to contact them.

## Brief update on the Kesslers

Laurie writes that Wayne (both Adi Teclesan 64-66) went back to Asmara for 9 weeks to work for Catholic Relief Services and another NGO. She is getting settled back in their California home after being away for 12 years. Together they are writing a book about their seven years in Eritrea from whence they recently returned.

## Restaurant recommendation —

Peter Wilson (staff spouse 64-66) has written about the Lalibela Ethiopia Restaurant, 176 Temple Street, New Haven CT. - 203-789-1232. "Classy decor + *ferengi wat*."

## Travel in Ethiopia

Wilderness Travel has 5 17-day tours of Ethiopia scheduled for next year that include Addis, the Omo River valley, Lalibela, Condar and Lake Tana. For more info: call 800/368-2794, visit [www.WildernessTravel.com](http://www.WildernessTravel.com).

## In memory

We have recently learned that—

Carl H. Penndorf (70-72) has passed away.

Alice Sprengle Hall (Jimma 62-64) died January 31, 2002 at the age of 94.

Cora Parrish (Addis Ababa, Asmara 62-64) died a number of years ago.

Richard Buhrendorf (Harar 1967) died in San Francisco on August 11, 1991



## New shipment!

Baseball hats embroidered in full color with the flags of Ethiopia and Eritrea on a cotton, khaki-colored hat.

To order, send a check made out to EEE RPCVs for \$14 (includes postage) to:

Marian Haley Beil  
4 Lodge Pole Road  
Pittsford NY 14534

## Letter from Luke and Becky

In the Spring-Summer 2001 edition of *The Herald*, we published a lengthy letter from **Luke Taylor** (Este, Ethiopia 1998–99), that described his transfer from Ethiopia to China as a PCV. Readers may recall his commitment to public service, as he and his wife, **Becky Boltz**, went back to eastern Arizona to resume teaching on the Navajo reservation. "Sanders, Arizona, is a town that eats its children," he wrote. When the chance came to fulfill their Peace Corps obligation by going to China, the two went to Liupanshui City.

This past June 25, Luke and Becky's term of service ended. In a letter sent to a huge cotillion of folks, Becky announced a job search in the Minneapolis area. They had sent out their teaching credentials and had no responses, so they were worried. "We fear," she wrote, "that many people may look at our qualifications and feel we are suitable for a job, but just too difficult to get in touch with. . . they may feel we are qualified but just too difficult to contact and interview at such a distance."

Qualified to teach history and TEFL/ESL, they are, like many RPCVs, worried about returning to the flow of the mainstream of American employment.

While *The Herald* is sure to follow up on the story of these dedicated RPCVs, they may be contacted at [beckyboltz@yahoo.com](mailto:beckyboltz@yahoo.com).

## Wofford & Son

### Harris

Harris Wofford, *pere grise* of Ethiopia and Eritrea PCVs, is the 2002 recipient of the John W. Gardner Leadership Award presented by the organization Independent Sector (IS). Named after the founder of Common Cause and the IS, the award is presented to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to civil rights and volunteerism. The award was presented at Independent Sector's annual conference, October 28, in Cleveland.

Wofford was counsel to the first US Commission on Civil Rights. He was a key player in the foundation of the Peace Corps, served as its associate director, and is best remembered by PCVs from Ethiopia and

Eritrea as the first guy who sat in the Big Seat in Addis. Wofford later served as college president, US Senator, and CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. He helped create AmeriCorps and Serve America.

Harris Wofford, worthy winner of any and all awards that recognize civil rights and human rights and volunteerism contributions, served in the administrations of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Clinton.

### Dan

Dan Wofford, son of Harris, is running for Congress in Pennsylvania. According to John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62–64), as reported in the last issue of *The Herald*, "He is in a district that did not exist before the new [6th] Congressional district lines were drawn. The district was carved out by the Republicans in Harrisburg [no relation] specifically so that State Senator Jim Gerlach could get a promotion to Congress."

In mid-August a Global Strategy Group survey of 500 "likely voters" in the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, revealed that Wofford is no longer a dark horse. "The most important finding in the survey is that Dan Wofford starts this race statistically tied with his opponent," Global Strategies reported. "This is most impressive in light of the efforts of the Republican-controlled legislature in Pennsylvania who created this district with a Gerlach victory in mind, giving the district a 50%-39% Republican registration advantage."

The district was won by Gore in the presidential election, and when combining the Gore and Nader votes, it showed a 52 percent margin. The Global Strategies Group's report reveals that while there may be a large number of Republican registrants, a significant percentage will vote independently, virtually leveling the field. The poll revealed that Wofford was actually better known than Gerlach and Wofford trailed only by four points. In addition, the pollees liked Wofford's stands on prescription drug relief, corporate pollution, pro-choice, and corporate accountability.

\* Final count: Gerlach 102,670; Wofford, 97,309

## Mirkin steps into hot water

Harris Mirkin (Dessie, Addis Ababa 62-64) rides a bicycle and looks a lot like Albert Einstein. For nearly four decades, he's been a professor of political science at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. His academic focus has long been political philosophy and the politics of sex and gender.

Prof. Mirkin wrote an article about pedophilia and children's sexuality that was published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 1999. According to an article in the *Kansas City Star* (Living section, 6/23/02), "The genesis for the article actually goes back 40 years, Mirkin said, to his days in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia," the reporter noted.

Mirkin described a trip he'd taken with other PCVs when their jeep broke down. They walked to a nearby village. Mirkin observed how the women in the area wore knee-length skirts and were bare-breasted. "We look at them, they look at us," he said, "and both groups think, 'How strange!'"

Mirkin, who taught middle school English in Ethiopia, also recalled taking his students to the movies occasionally. In one film, he recalled, a young couple held hands and kissed each other furtively. His reaction was one of chaste innocence, his students wondered if the girl was a whore, for only prostitutes would hold hands in public.

"Mirkin's philosophy — formed in part by his experience in Ethiopia — is that everyone must dissect their assumptions about what it means to be male or female, what it means to be black, what it means to be homosexual," the reporter wrote. "We are conditioned to think this way by society, he said, and the academic in him wants to examine the assumptions and see if they withstand scrutiny."

"My starting point is that these things are political and social creations, so I try to unpack them a little bit," he said.

A former student recalled, "He creates finer distinctions than most of us would do and then

shakes things up a bit. He ticked me off a lot . . . He demanded I be rigorous in what I was saying and the information I was throwing around."

It was this shaking up process that dropped Mirkin into the hot water of academia and politics with his article in the *Journal of Homosexuality*. According to the *Star* reporter, the good professor sought to stir up the pot regarding the sexuality of children and pedophilia. He began asking questions about interaction between children and adults. "If a society agrees a 6- or 8-year-old can't consent to sex, what about a 14-year-old?" the reporter paraphrased Mirkin. "I do think there's a moral panic in this country," he said, "and I do think the temperature should be lowered so we can talk about it."

The journal article made its way to Missouri legislators. Suddenly, talk-shows wanted a sound-bite or interview, CNN and the BBC locked in, as well as *The Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. *The New York Times* called his article "silly." *The Wall Street Journal* commented that Mirkin's suggestion of examining the issue of pedophilia "made as much sense as opening up the topic of human sacrifice."

"State lawmakers condemned his article and voted to delete \$100,000 from UMKC's budget as punishment," the *Star* noted.

Mirkin's comparison between pedophilia and the significance of women's and gay rights is what seems to stick in society's craw more than anything else. "Like homosexuality," he said, "the concept of child molestation is a culture- and class-specific, modern creation."

He is not advocating legitimization of pedophilia, he asserted. No matter that he's a grandfather twice over and happily married to his second wife, Mirkin has been condemned locally, regionally, and nationally. "The message is that anyone who talks about this is an immoral bastard," he concluded, noting that he has received an outpouring of sympathy and support. "There's a lot more support for talking about the issue than I thought there would be."



# Books + Writers

## Books by Ethiopia and Eritrea Peace Corps writers

### *Peaceful Dwelling*

#### *Meditations for Healing and Living*

by Madeline Ko-i Bastis (Harar 62-64)  
Tuttle Publishing, 2000  
\$14.95  
144 pages

### *Heart of Forgiveness*

#### *A Practical Path to Healing*

by Madeline Ko-i Bastis (Harar 62-64)  
Red Wheel/Weisner  
(due 2/2003, can order at Amazon now)  
\$12.95  
128 pages

## Another award for Millie

Mildred Taylor (Ethiopia 1965-67) has won the PEN USA Children's Literature Award for *The Land* (Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2001). Mildred was honored with other winners at the 12th Annual Literary Awards Festival, on Wednesday, October 23, 2002, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

## New and of interest — print

*Women, Tradition, and Development in Africa : The Eritrean Case*, by Tesfa G. Gebremedhin, Red Sea Pr, 2002, \$24.95.

### New magazine about Ethiopia

*Branna*, \*published in Canada will "try and represent the Ethiopian experience with a mix of essays, reportage and photography; with reviews of books, music, theatre and art." 12 issues/\$35 To subscribe: write Branna, 317-207 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2N2; phone (613)293-4596; fax: (613)233-1056; e-mail: brannamag@hotmail.com. For more info, go to: www.branna.ca

\*Now in the EEE RPCVs library is a copy of the first issue of Branna which includes articles on the fistula hospital, a report from a peacekeeper on

the border and Gigi the music star. Contact Hayward to borrow it.

### Mengistu's Memoirs Find a Market

The Deng's chief terrorist, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, now in exile in Zimbabwe, has published his memoirs, modestly titled, *Memoirs of Mengistu*. Mega Publishing Enterprises has issued 30,000 copies in Ethiopia and has proclaimed the edition a best-seller. The book was written by journalist Genet Ayele, "41 and a mother of four, [who] traveled to Zimbabwe on three different occasions in the past three years to meet Mengistu," according to an article at the Africa news website Africast.com. "Her account also includes interviews with former Mengistu aides now behind bars in Addis Ababa."

According to Mega Publishing, "avid readers across the country are jostling each other for a copy." Plans are being made to translate the book— written in Amharic — into English and French.

### Children's book

*Silly Mammo*, an Ethiopian children's picture book with a story retold by Gebregeorgis Yohannes and illustrated by Bogale Belachew, has been published by The Ethiopia Books for Children and Education Foundation. \$10 + \$4 s&h. For more, email: ebcef@aol.com, phone 301/582-0295. Profits go to Children's Book Center in Addis. You can also purchase copies to be given to children at the Book Center.

### Booklet

*Memorial Service for Clare Lindgren Wofford* (wife of Harris Wofford, first Eth/CD) Remembrances and photos.

## New and of interest — film

*Bricks of Peace* — "a portrayal of the Eritrean Experience and History" — produced and directed by Kibrom Tekeste. To learn if and/or when the film will be shown in your area, write kbvideo@juno.com

**The Hospital by the River  
A Story of Hope**

by Dr. Catherine Hamlin, with John Little  
Pan Macmillan Australia, illustrated  
308 pages  
No price listed.

(Not yet available in the US except through the American Friends Foundation for Childbirth Injuries, [www.fistulahospital.org](http://www.fistulahospital.org).)

Reviewed by Hayward Allen

.....

RIC HAAS (Dembidolo/Addis Ababa, 1967-69) handed me this book at the E&E Country Update session of the 40+1 Conference. I told him I would review the book because I believe that his foundation's assistance to the fistula hospital in Addis is a worthy cause. There was no way of knowing what a goldmine of the author's personal experiences and contemporary Ethiopian history *The Hospital by the River* would be.

In my 30-odd years of book reviewing, one of my methods is to crimp page tops and bottoms at places I will relocate as I write. If I were to go back to the plethora of page crimpings, I would produce a chapter-by-chapter extrapolation and review.

So, I will do the opposite. I will simplify matters by noting two dimensions of *The Hospital by the River*. No, I'll note three, if not more. But I will keep this short because I believe that any and all members of E&E RPCVs should find a way to get this book, to read it, and to act upon their own conclusions.

That may sound like a reviewer's cop-out, but isn't that exactly what a reviewer is supposed to do? Inspire folks to check out the book for themselves?

.....

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

That posited, here are the points I wish to briefly illuminate.

1) Fistula obstetrica is a horrible condition women face when they cannot have their babies delivered safely. No, that's not really what fistula is. Fistula means that a child-bearing woman can have her guts torn apart, literally. Imagine a mother-to-be carrying a still-born fetus, or a woman who cannot deliver a normal child vaginally. And the woman cannot get to a hospital or clinic to help her.

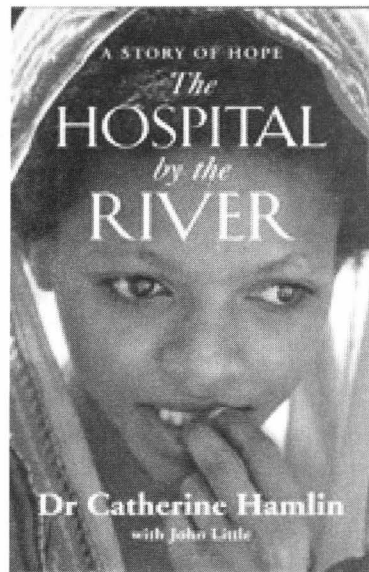
2) What happens is that the baby ruptures the mother's tissues between the vagina and the bladder or rectum. The woman, if she doesn't die, is condemned to a fate worse than death. She will never bear children. She will be constantly incontinent. She will reek of urine and feces. She will be an untouchable, an outcast.

3) In Third World countries, young girls are impregnated, inadequate diets are legion,

and medical facilities might as well be on the moon. Ethiopia is one of those moon-distanced nations.

4) Enter Drs. Reg and Catherine Hamlin, doctors of obstetrics and gynecology. In 1959, he was 50-years-old; she was 35-years-old. They went to Ethiopia because they answered, from Australia, an advertisement in the British Medical Association's *The Lancet*: "Gynaecologist wanted to set up a school of midwifery for nurses in the Princess Tsehai Memorial Hospital in Addis Ababa." It was a three-year contract. It became a lifelong commitment. It became more than midwifery. The assignment became the creation of a hospital dedicated to women sadly afflicted with fistula.

5) The conditions, situations, and individual stories of fistula are vibrant and heart-rending.



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

6) The descriptions of the two doctors' lives, their work, their fund-raising, their family problems are humbly delivered, honest, and full of pluck. Dr. Catherine Hamlin is an indefatigable optimist, a woman who actually looks "on the bright side of life." She is, ultimately, amazing.

7) For readers of *The Herald*, her account of the Red Terror and the Degue is explicit and fascinating. Although not so knowledgeable of the Mengistu Era histories in print, I would measure her descriptions and experiences as invaluable to understanding the on-the-ground conditions faced by service-providers in Ethiopia during that horrific reign.

8) Not once does she mention the Peace Corps, and that kind of surprised me, but then maybe her and Reg's 24/7 commitment did not include relations with the incoming, short-termers from the US. She does relate fond memories of various British ex-pats and recalls with gentle glee the Order of the British Empire that Queen Elizabeth presented to Reg, in person, in Ethiopia.

9) There are few accounts, as I have read, of the last days of Haile Selassie and his family, his death and their imprisonment. The good doctors obviously loved the Emperor, loved and had intimate contact with his family, and did as much as possible to aid them in their long imprisonment and detention by the Dergue. There is the story of the VW Bug in which H.E. was carted away to his death, for example, as well as the detective work to find his remains, which it seems were beneath a slab under Mengistu's desk.

10) If there is a tribute, besides the BBC and Australian TV films honoring the Hamlins and their hospital, it is the undying devotion to a cause by a couple who left "civilization" and went where their religious teachings took them. Their mutual devotion to each other, and their exceptional humility, are both worth considering through *The Hospital by the River*.

11) It is no wonder why Ric Haas has taken on a new task.

## Provide health books for rural communities

*Lee Gallery writes:* I was a PCV in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia from 1964-66. I am now volunteering with The Hesperian Foundation, a small non-profit healthcare publishing company dedicated to writing and distributing books for rural villages all over the world whose access to healthcare is limited. For a description of our foundation, books and a list of publishers of translations, see our website:

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

Our most popular book, *Where There Is No Doctor*, has been called the most widely used healthcare book in the world and it is now provided to all Peace Corps Volunteers when they go in-country. It has been translated into over 80 languages, including Amharic, Tigre and Tigrinya.

My job at the foundation is to handle the Gratis Book Program — to respond to requests from rural villagers for free copies of our books. It is almost as rewarding as being in the Peace Corps — when I send books, I receive wonderful thank-you letters telling how the books have changed the whole community.

I am receiving an increasing volume of requests from Ethiopia, from rural health workers who have no reference books, teachers who want to use our books for their "science" classes, farmers, veterinarians who are the only trained people in their areas — and more and more health clinics are begging for HIV information. Ethiopian requests now outnumber all the rest of the African countries combined, except Ghana. But our fund to send free books is very small and we can't send free books to all who need them. We would welcome donations from Ethiopia and Eritrea RPCVs to support this very effective project. The cost of a single book is \$15.

The Hesperian Foundation  
1919 Addison Street, Suite 304  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
Tel: 510/845-1447

Specify if you want your tax-deductable donation to go the Gratis Book Project, and for Ethiopia or Eritrea.

# Editor's POV and Plea

## The Herald needs help. Yours.

**A**S A READER OF THIS MAGAZINE, you may have noticed a paucity of information about the RPCVs of Ethiopian and Eritrean service. Lots of interesting info about the two countries, about the Peace Corps, about the 40+1 Conference, etc. Of the 30 different articles, there are only a couple that deal specifically with RPCVs.

As editor, I can only work with what I am given by you folks, the NPCA, PeaceCorpsOnline, and individuals like John Coyne, Marian Haley Beil, and Shlomo Bachrach.

E&E RPCVs was founded to keep the spirit moving, the spirit that inspired us to serve in the Peace Corps. Part of E&E RPCVs mission is to communicate with members and others about each other, as well as each country in which we worked.

I need your help. What you are doing with your life and career is of interest to us all, I can assure you. People you are looking for or who are looking for you is newsworthy stuff.

I can put together 25,000–50,000 words every four months, but the words I would like to include in that number need to come from you, the reader.

You may think tidbits, comments, questions, and information might be mundane. Rest assured, they are not. Others want to know. I want to know.

So — [hallenoz@rochester.rr.com](mailto:hallenoz@rochester.rr.com) is the surest, fastest way to get information, comments, and questions to me.

If you want to send news clippings, obituaries, birth announcements, looking-for news: 264 Garnsey Road, Pittsford, NY 14534 is the address on the mailbox in front of our house.

Let me give you a couple of samples —

- Paul Reagan (Nazareth 62–64) is running for political office in his area. I'd like to know more.
- Joanna London (Harar 62–64) is working diligently on political autonomy for Washington D.C. I would like to know more.
- Carol Mauritsen-MacDonald (Harar 64–66) is the newest member of the E&E RPCVs Steering Committee. I would like to know more, especially since I'm on that committee, too.

In the "small world" category —

About the time I was in Washington for the 40+1, my wife Ronda was having lunch with an old schoolmate here in Rochester. She told Ronda that she thought her cousin was in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia. His name — Terry O'Herron (Addis Ababa/Keren 1962–64). She sent me his email address. I wrote to him, and he wrote back.

Terry lives in Horseheads, NY, about an hour-and-a-half south of here, and sort of the sister-city of Elmira, which is where Ronda's parents live. So, my next trip in that direction will include the sharing of a beer, and memories of Melotti and St. George. Here are some points of interest in his email, things that as an editor and an EERPCV I want to know:

- Terry has three kids and two grandkids.
- He retired from teaching in 1996 from the Elmira school system.
- As a Volunteer, he taught at Tafai Makonnen School his first year; lived in the yellow brick house across from the American embassy with Andy Anderson, Hoyt Smith, Albert Bryant and

Bill Schmick. "I basically hung out with most of the people from Addis, including Jim Merrill and his roommates, Ernie Fox, John Coyne, Jim Phillips, and Sam Fisk."

- For the second year, he switched assignments with Mark Himmelstein in Keren. Lived there with Terry Moon. "Most of my friends were from Asmara, including Ray Capozzi, Ty Vignone, Peter Leofonti, Lew Lennon, etc."
- "I got out to Dire Dawa in the summer of 1963, and the PCVs there took us on a day trip to Harar. We visited a house with a group of guys living there, including a guy named Ed [Warren] who was a librarian. Never got to see the Hyena Man . . ."
- "Tried to keep in touch with the PCVs, but only swap Christmas cards with Ray Capozzi anymore . . . Still very much interested in any news of our group. I still consider 1962–1964 to be the grandest two years of my life. Met a lot of fine people. Sorry I lost touch with them. Bring me up to date on anybody you hear from. Quite a few have passed away . . . I'm in the phone book."

I hasten to add that the intrepid Marian Haley Beil has kept reminding Terry that his E&E RPCVs dues lapsed long ago, and that he could get *The Herald* for free — if he paid his dues!

But back to my original point — he'll never find out news about his kith and Peace Corps kin unless information is sent to *The Herald*, etc., etc.

Please . . .

— Hayward Allen

## THE HERALD

Editor: Hayward Allen (Harar 62–64)

Design & distribution: Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 62–64)

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

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

News summaries in *The Herald* were compiled and rewritten from dozens of news stories forwarded to *The Herald* by Shlomo Bachrach, who gathers information about life on the Horn of Africa.

Sources for the news summaries: *Addis Ababa Tribune*; *Africast.com*; *Afrol.com*; All Africa Global Media (*allAfrica.com*); *Awate.com*; *Daily Monitor of Addis Ababa*; Associated Press; BBC; *East African Standard*; Eritrea New Agency; Ethiopian Government Information Services, International Organization of Migration; *New York Times*; ONLF.org; Panafrican News Agency; United Nations in Eritrea and Ethiopia; U.N. news service: U.N. Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN); *USAToday*; *Visafriic*; *Washington Post*; *Wonchif*.

Sources for other articles include: the Peace Corps, the National Peace Corps Association; *PeaceCorpsWriters.org*.

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for publication, it would be appreciated if it is submitted digitally — via email or on disk (labeled as to software and computer used and with a hard copy).

Photo submissions are **enthusiastically** welcomed. They should be clear, with images large enough to be easily discerned. All photos will be returned.

Send all to:

Hayward Allen  
264 Garnsey Road  
Pittsford, NY 14534.  
email: halleno2@rochester.rr.com

## E&E RPCVs Steering Committee

### Hayward Allen

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

### Marian Haley Beil

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

### C.J. Smith Castagnaro

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

### Leo Cecchini

(Asmara 62-64)  
Peace Initiative  
16970-C San Carlos Blvd.  
#243  
Ft. Myers FL 33908  
347/742-6619  
leo@cecchini.org

### John Coyne

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

### Gloria Gieseke Curtis

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

### Dave Gurr

(Addis Ababa 62-64)  
enCORPS  
4311 Loyola Ave  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
703/370-2553  
fax: 703/370-1861  
dgurr@cns.gov

### Gerry Hoffman

(Mekele 63-65)  
445 Third Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11215-2983  
718/768-8518  
ghoff@attglobal.net

### Carol Mauritsen- McDonald

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

### Judy Smith

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

### Jim Solomon

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

## Advocacy Coordinator

### Ray Donaldson

(Ambo, Debre Berhan  
62-64)  
Advocacy Coordinator  
7028 Loganberry Ln  
Fulton MD 20759  
301/776-0208  
raydonaldson  
hotmail.com

## Other contacts

### Embassy of Eritrea

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

### Embassy of Ethiopia

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

### National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)

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### Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

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

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

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to beat the dues  
increase!**

**See page 37 for details**

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