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Drought

By Hayward Allen (Harar 62–64)

Editor's note: Over the past months, my email network has been almost overwhelmed by the information on the drought and its effects upon the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Readers of *THE HERALD* are aware of the terrible human and economic losses this particular drought has brought upon the region. What follows is a monthly summary of the reports through early February 2003.

August

UN report

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission issued a 20-page plea for assistance in combating drought and the shortage of food in Ethiopia. This research-heavy report covers not only the drought effects on food shortages but also on non-food areas, e.g. health, water supply, agriculture, and livestock.

All center on the annual rainfall, the *belg* rains, which fall February through June, with rains continuing through October. The first two months of the 2002 rains generated cautious optimism, then the first signs of distress began in April as weather conditions turned adverse. Long-term and short-term crops were affected, and livestock began

to suffer. The problems were heaviest in Afar and Somali Regions; however, conditions were deteriorating in the northern and southern areas, as well. Effects were being felt in the Rift Valley lowlands, as well as Gamo Gofa and Tigray.

The World Food Programme, the Famine Early Warning System, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were using words like "the situation is extremely grave" and the "worst disaster in the last decade or more." According to the August 2002 report, measures were being taken to solve problems, but there was a sense of futility to the efforts of the Ethiopian government, the UN, and other development and donor groups. (Go to www.reliefweb.int for continuing reports.)

Cattle losses

The BBC reported in August that the Ethiopian government had stated nearly 180,000 cattle had died due to the drought in Afar, Oromiya, and Somali Regions since May. A shortage of water and grazing are blamed for the losses.

September

In early September, the *Addis Tribune* offered an analysis of the "food security situation in Ethiopia." According to the Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and

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Preparedness Commission (DPPC), the cattle losses were also impacted by the "inevitable strife between pastoral people struggling for access to scarce water points."

The problem of the drought had now moved beyond the livestock deaths, for "stark images of dying cattle have now been supplemented by more urgent images of children dying." And the attention was shifting from Afar to "a belt of suffering in the southern areas of West and East Hararghe [in Oromo Region] and in the neighboring area of Fik in Somali Region.

The analysis mentions Tigray and Amhara Regions. Also, "along the escarpment which rises from the Danakil Lowlands to the Northeast Highlands, the rains have failed." Tens of thousands of Ethiopians are now looking for food assistance, "at least until the hoped for harvest next year. It is too late for this year."

Southern People's Region, where farmers normally harvest crops of maize and yams several times annually, "this year has pushed the highlanders over the edge of hunger and potential starvation."

There are regions in Ethiopia that received normal or above normal rainfall. Parts of the Somali Region, which suffered in 2000, were blessed with rain as were western Oromo and Gojam which is good news; unfortunately, according to the *Addis Tribune*, last year's low prices for surplus yields discouraged farmers from overproducing this year. "Why bother, when they can't sell their crops anyway?" the writer hypothesized.

The newspaper gave high marks to the US, the Dutch, British, and "even the slow-moving European Union" for having announced food assistance programs.

"Let's hope that the NGOs and other international aid agencies, with the support of the media are successful in raising the profile of Ethiopia and

generating a sufficient response," the analyst concludes. "And let's hope that the response comes before the world has to see more images of starving Ethiopians on television."

October

In October, the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) issued a story regarding the rejection by the European Commission of claims made by seven international charities that the EC "is not doing enough to help drought victims in Ethiopia."

"The EC welcomes any constructive criticism that may help improve its programme," rebutted an EC statement. The NGO "statement, however, does not provide any accurate analysis of the situation or any proposals aimed at better quality of donor support."

The IRIN story noted that the EC had "earmarked some 67,000 metric tons of food for Ethiopia. The NGOs believe that only 30,000 is targeted to the current emergency and the rest for future years. "Any further pledges from donors will be made on the basis of the revised appeal expected over the next few days," the EC responded. The European organization also added that it was working with the Ethiopian government on the timing of the aid and the any aid given needs to have the root causes of food shortages addressed as well.

November

Ethiopian Reporter story

The *Ethiopian Reporter* issued a story that said 6.3 million Ethiopians were drought victims in the last quarter of 2002. The regional breakdown of distribution of that number: 29.1% in Ormiaya; 21.1% in Amhara; 13.3% in Tigray; 11.5% in Somali; 7.9% in Afar; 0.9% in Dire Dawa; .03% in Harari.

"Remarkable losses of livestock products in pastoral areas, the absence of root crops, vegetables, early and green harvests in hardest hit areas, the death of large numbers of livestock, poor physical conditions, and the low price of coffee," the story recounted; all contribute to the need for immediate food aid.

"According to reliable sources," the article stated, "if continuous and adequate relief food distribution is not under way on time, the high risk of mortality [and] malnutrition" will prevail.

USAID analysis

USAID issued a "fact sheet" on the food security crisis in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Among the statistics: in a normal year as many as three million Ethiopians and one-third-of-a-million Eritreans would be at risk. Projections for 2003 are as high as 14 million for Ethiopia and 1.1 million for Eritrea. The "food gap" might reach as high as almost 2.2 million metric tons for Ethiopia and more than a quarter-million metric tons for Eritrea.

"Pre-famine indicators" gleaned by USAID were a rapid rise in prices for grains, shortages of seeds and short season produce, significant death rates of cattle and the drastic reduction in herd value, deterioration of nutrition, and a long way until the next November's harvests.

Further information go to www.usaid.gov.

Slate.com analyzes First World press coverage

The reaction of the First World press was reviewed by June Thomas in "African Guns & Butter" for web ezine Slate.com on 11/14/02: *The Financial Times* observed, after a statement by P.M. Meles Zenawi regarding the possibility of 14 million Ethiopians starving in the coming months, "Coming from a government intent on shedding Ethiopia's image of perennial disaster, his appeal underlined the depth of a crisis of pan-continental proportions."

An op-ed piece in the *Independent* blamed the West for the food crisis, "Governments in rich nations tend to assume that African governments, aid agencies and UN bodies always put the worst possible spin on any situation to increase the resources put at their disposal What has become clear is that the poor of the world have an increasingly narrower margin to tolerate the West's 'show us the dead bodies' skepticism, and meanwhile, the rich world continues to exact debt repayments from nations such as Ethiopia and rigs world trade so

that the price of Ethiopia's chief export, coffee, has over the past three years plummeted to a 30-year low." An editorial in the same publication agreed that the West often gives "when its conscience is stung by skeletal figures," but also casts some blame on governments and leaders who have opted on spending millions on border wars and internal political conflicts.

France's *Le Monde* also laid blame on the Ethiopian government's mismanagement, the border war, and the lack of land reform. "Reform would not end the drought, but it would mitigate its impact on Ethiopia."

The London *Times* agreed that land reform has "doomed the country to perpetual crisis," and that Meles Zenawi was ramping up his pleas due to "more competition than usual this year for emergency aid funds" for southern Africa, as well as military actions in Afghanistan and possibly Iraq.

A letter to the *Guardian* noted that funds expended in a war with Iraq "would be enough to solve the imminent famine in Ethiopia . . . and to construct the irrigation network that would ensure it never happens again . . . War on famine is certain to save millions of lives, whereas war on Iraq will kill tens of thousands and make refugees of many more. The war on famine can be won, whereas the war on terrorism cannot."

Which famine is worse?

The World Bank's "daily press summary" for November 13 revealed that UK International Development Secretary Clare Short had accused the UN of acting irresponsibly by exaggerating the threat of famine in Ethiopia while the situation in southern Africa was far more severe. "I think the situation in southern Africa is much more worrying," she told the BBC. "There is a danger that we will see a significant loss of life."

Georgia Shaver, the UN World Food Programme representative in Addis responded, "In southern Africa, there are 10–14 million people needing aid across six countries. In Ethiopia, we could have the same number in just one country."

Shrinking deserts

Satellite images of northern Africa reveal the retreat of the Sahara, as color pictures show green where brown once was, according to analysis by the *British New Scientist* magazine. The region stretches from the western edges of Eritrea and Ethiopia to Mauritania. According to the magazine, it is thought that increased rainfall and improved farming methods are turning back the desert and the devastation of drought.

Much of the improvement appears to be in areas where the aid agencies are concentrating investments in soil and water conservation. Contour farming has also proved successful, whereby lines of rock and stone are installed along slopes and contours to allow water to soak in and to avoid the loss of topsoil during rain run-off.

Short shot back, "I heard that woman's very irresponsible statement. Four million people [in Ethiopia] are dependent on food aid every single year. This is a well-organized country used to handling aid . . . The crisis in southern Africa is the same sort of numbers, but less well-organized. People are weakened by HIV, and it is dangerous that we will not be able to reach them."

A response to the development secretary's BBC interview appeared in the London *Times* as Jonathan Clayton took her to task. He argued that different factors are at work in Ethiopia and southern Africa. "There is only so much donor money to go around," he said, "and a large proportion of it has already gone to countries in southern Africa that are facing drought, such as Zimbabwe and Malawi."

Clayton contested Short's assertion that famine conditions do not occur unless there is gross governmental mismanagement. "The agricultural situation in Ethiopia is dire. It is a feudal system. The Government owns all the land and tenants are forced to buy it back from the State. They are then required to buy fertilizer from the state and mortgage the cash from their forthcoming coffee crop to pay back the interest on loans."

Nonetheless, the famine and drought are real. Ethiopia, on one hand, according to Clayton, does have something of an advantage as a seeker of aid. "It is a household name. The 1984 Live Aid concert, Bob Geldorf, pictures of emaciated children and the BBC's Michael Buerk built up a memorable and tragic picture, one that the British public clearly remember. Mention the word famine, and it does not take much for British taxpayers to dig deep into their pockets. Malawi, by comparison, does not have that advantage."

December

Another BBC story came out the day after Christmas, as it was reported that the area between Dire Dawa and the Somali border was so drought-stricken that Issa herders were driving their dying cattle from their traditional grazing lands. The wells and bore holes are dry, causing herders to

dig the dry riverbeds, often as deep as 25 feet, more than three times the usual depth. "Three men are having to go down the wells, throwing the precious water from one to another, until it finally reaches the surface and can be poured into skin troughs for animals to drink from," said BBC reporter Martin Plaut.

An estimated 15,000 head of cattle have moved through Dire Dawa on the way to eastern Hararghe. Others are being driven toward Somalia. The herders' wives and children have been left behind in their villages. Afar and Issa herders are fighting over grazing and water along their migration routes.

"Keeping their animals alive is vital if they are to maintain their way of life, but that is looking increasingly difficult as the current drought takes its toll on people and their livestock," Plaut concluded.

UN input

A report by Reuters in Rome quoted the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) as saying that there was enough food, barely, to last for the next one or two months in Ethiopia.

The UN's IRIN reported from Asmara in December that a UNICEF study in Eritrea reveals that over one-half of the country's population are experiencing "pre-famine conditions." Twenty percent are facing immediate food shortages, "leading to critical levels of malnutrition among children." Most affected were Anseba, Gash Barka, and the Northern Red Sea Provinces.

"The World Health Organization defines a situation as critical when more than 15% of children under five are acutely malnourished, according to certain measures of weight versus height," IRIN reported.

An estimated 200,000 women and children were malnourished and "need immediate food aid to save lives." The food shipments were slow in arriving. "We are late, and unfortunately, I'm afraid that we are too late," said Christian Balslev-Olesen, Eritrea's director of UNICEF operations. "It seems as

if we haven't really learned the lesson of how important it is to have well-organized interventions ready before children die in front of the cameras. I'm afraid we could be facing the same situation as in the 1980s where intervention came too late."

January

At the beginning of 2003, the *New York Times* ran an article bearing a Dere Kiltu dateline. Written by Marc Lacey, the story is a first-hand interpretation by an American who visited an area hit hard by the drought. He interviewed a survivor of the 1984 famine. "She lives in one of the country's relatively few pockets known for producing a surplus of food."

Not this past year, however. "She tried to plant crops, but her land produced nothing — no sorghum, no corn, no teff, no wheat," he wrote.

The *Times* reporter was traveling with US Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA). "The scenes I'm seeing are the same ones I saw [in 1984]," he said. "It's dire."

Lacey interviewed another '84 famine veteran, Paul Turnbull, head of the WFP in Ethiopia. "If this turns into a famine," he said, "we've all failed. There are a lot of other emergencies in the world, and we can only hope that people don't think, 'Oh my God, not Ethiopia again.'"

"Food shipments have begun arriving at the port in Djibouti," Lacey wrote, "where they are loaded on trucks for the long drive to rural Ethiopia. Already, officials say, about a third of the projected assistance needed for the coming year, 1.4 million tons of emergency food aid, has been pledged by an array of governments. United States officials are expected to contribute another third.

Rep. Wolf visited a mother of eight who had lost nine of ten cows to the drought. He peered into her food container, "The cupboard is bare," he said. According to Lacey, he gave the woman some money. "An aide was busy videotaping the misery, an effort to focus attention back in Washington, once again, on Ethiopia," he concluded.

For more on the Wolf trip, go to www.house.gov/wolf/ethiopatrip.htm where the Congressman has

links to his five-page report in PDF format, plus photos and film.

February

Fund raising drought

According to a UNICEF release through the VOA News, a recent appeal for funds to provide help for Eritrea was a dismal failure. The goal was a very optimistic \$11 million, but the actual collection netted only \$760,000.

UNICEF's representative in Eritrea says that the nation will exhaust its food supplies by April. "He says even if donors were to send food to Eritrea now, it would not arrive in time," said VOA's Lisa Schlein in Geneva.

"It takes us at least two to three months to get food from Europe," Christian Balslev-Olesen said. "It takes us four to six months to get food from North America or Asia . . . So, we are not going to meet the deadline in April when the country is running out of food and water.

"And I dare not think of what is happening if the war in Iraq is starting soon," he continued. "The Red Sea is going to be, if not impossible, then very expensive to reach the ports of Eritrea." He said the only alternatives are shipments through Sudan and Ethiopia.

UNICEF estimates that 70% of the 2.3 million Eritreans are endangered by the acute food and water shortages.

Would you like to take some action on this disaster?

Chuck Baquet (Somalia 1965-67), retired Ambassador to Djibouti, has offered to help members of EEE RPCVs connect with the US ambassador to Ethiopia in an effort to explore assistance possibilities that our group might pursue. Are there any among you who would like to get take a leadership role on an EEE RPCV response to this dire problem? Contact Marian Haley Beil.

The Treaty

UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN appointed Angela Kane — who formerly served as the director of the Americas and Europe Division in the UN Department of Political Affairs — the Deputy Head of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Kane will serve in Asmara. Her counterpart in Addis is Cheikh-Tidiane Gaye. The UN Special Representative remains Legwaila Joseph Legwaila.

Secretary General Annan said at year-end that the peace process has been making steady progress since the signing of the treaty in June 2000. He said he was encouraged by the absence of cease-fire violations since the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone.

"I hope that these achievements, which are a credit to the parties, will be carried forward," he said. "What lies ahead is potentially difficult, as it will set the actual demarcation of the border, with all its legal, political, humanitarian and human rights issues. These will require immediate attention for the sake of the people who will be affected by the transfer of territorial control."

The new commander of the 4,200-member UN peacekeeping force involved in the maintenance of peace along the Temporary Security Zone, Major General Robert Gordon, has told both sides that he plans to keep the situation in hand as the final demarcation process begins in May. General Gordon stated that the UNMEE has contingency plans in place in case there are flare-ups or burgeoning tensions along the 600-mile zone as the border is drawn. It is anticipated that the final international border will be completed by the first part of 2004.

General Gordon replaced Major General Patrick Cammaert, whose departure was hastened by Ethiopia's demand that he be removed (see *THE HERALD*, #26, Fall 2002).

Boundary Commission formed

An independent body, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) has been formed to assist in the adjudication of demarcation issues. Military officials, for example, tend to favor the first focus to be upon the central portion of the zone, covering areas like Tserona in Eritrea and Zalambessa in Ethiopia. The EEBC also anticipates trouble when the new border divides established towns or villages; both parties must agree as to the division.

Prisoners of war

All prisoners of war and civilians interned during the two-year war have been released, according to an International Committee of the Red Cross report from Geneva. The ICRC has kept a registration and visitation list of those kept by Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Although the war officially ended in 2000, there were large numbers still held by both countries in 2002. In late November, Ethiopia sent 1,225 Eritreans home after their being repatriated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. There were 1,130 POWs and 95 civilian internees transported on 27 buses to the border of Eritrea. They crossed at a bridge over the Mereb River between the towns of Rama, Ethiopia, and Adi Quala, Eritrea.

In August, Eritrea released its last 279 Ethiopian POWs.

In all, 1,067 Ethiopian POWs, 5,055 Ethiopian civilians, 2,067 Eritrean POWs and 1,086 Eritrean civilians were repatriated under ICRC auspices.

Reparations

In December, the Ethiopian government sent a delegation of three to the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration. The trio will advise on the questions of reparations claimed by Eritrea following the two-year war.

Eritrea and Ethiopia hire lobbyists

In 2002, Ethiopia paid \$5.6 million in six months to the political public relations firm — aka lobbyists — Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, McPherson and Hand of Washington, D.C., to help the country put its best face forward with the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace treaty. VLBM&H also scouted possible commercial connections for Ethiopian businesses. Meanwhile, a Miami law firm, Greenberg Trauarig, has been retained by the government of Eritrea to handle its lobbying efforts before the US government. The price tag is, according to the *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, \$50,000 per month for the firm's services.

Eritrean news

Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62–64)

President Isaias speaks in South Africa

Eritrea's leader was one of the speakers at the World Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg last September. From the speech published in the Eritrean Shaebia.com, here are a few of his remarks.

- "I am here to add my voice and to reaffirm my government's commitment to the establishment of a stronger partnership among all of us to win the battle against world poverty and degradation of our environment."
- "In spite of the unprecedented degree of consensus about what is required to promote sustainable development, overcome world poverty, and prevent environmental degradation, progress so far has been limited. Therefore, as leaders upon whom the responsibility has been entrusted, we need to rekindle our commitments and translate commitments into action more vigorously than we have done in the past."
- "The consequences of inaction are unacceptable to both the poor and the wealthy nations because they negatively impact every aspect of our lives including the social, political, and cultural fabrics of our societies. But we cannot expect the poor to share the cost of preventing degradation or enhancing the environment. That is why poverty is the real enemy of the environment, and the only effective way to preserve the quality of the environment is by eliminating abject poverty."
- "The poor nations can benefit from development assistance. However, development aid works better when applied flexibly and when it is free of the burdensome conditions often associated with it."

- "We need to bequeath our children a cleaner and safer planet, and we must avoid the use of natural resources faster than they can be replenished. We must take action to curtail the generation of pollutants and emissions that are triggering global climate warming that threatens our health and the quality of our lives and that of our children."

The five "core principles" of Eritrea's "development strategy" were declared to be: "Developing the capabilities of our people as the principal asset and driving force of our . . . endeavor; establishing strong public-private sector partnership; striving for self-reliance and avoiding chronic and debilitating dependency on external aid; protecting the environment from the adverse affects of development programs; establishing effective development partnership with multilateral and bilateral development agencies, governments, and non-governmental organizations."

The Economist's take on Eritrea's president

An editorial in *The Economist* reacted to the changes President Isaias has wrought since the war with Ethiopia, but mostly it expresses an awestruck response to the change between 1991 and 2002.

"Eritrea so nearly got it right," the piece posits. Describing how after 1991's independence, "investors flocked to Asmara, its perfectly-preserved art deco capital, loving its spotless streets, espresso bars, and reformist government. Mr. Afwerki, a hero of the country's terrible 30-year struggle to secede from its giant neighbour, Ethiopia, was popular both at home and abroad. Eritreans admired him, and Bill Clinton included him in his 'new generation' of African leaders."

What leaves so many inside and outside Eritrea aghast is the "breathtaking speed [with which] he has managed to alienate practically everyone."

The Economist cites the inexplicable, terrible, costly two-year war with Ethiopia; the worldwide accusation of the Eritrean violation of human rights; the criminalization of criticism; the imprisonment without trial of journalists, students, politicians and ordinary citizens; the perpetual postponement of elections; the abolition of a free press; the more than a year internment of two Eritreans who worked at the American embassy; emigration is made difficult, so people with scholarships or job possibilities abroad most likely are forced to remain in Eritrea — to name a few charges leveled at Isaias and his government.

The president asserts that the CIA is trying to overthrow him, that his nation is not ready for democracy, that those who criticize are traitors, and that the mobilizing or drafting of young and older citizens to work construction at less than subsistence wages is what is called "national service."

The editorial's headline read "Eritrea's non-democracy: We fought for this?"

Anthony Lake differs with Eritrean Ambassador Lake in the *Boston Globe*

In October Anthony Lake, a former national security adviser and currently a teacher at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, wrote an explosive op-ed piece for the *Boston Globe*. Lake, the US representative at the negotiations of the 2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia peace treaty, was responding to news that an Eritrean colleague at the negotiations, Haile Woldensae, was being held incommunicado at "a secret place of detention." Lake was very concerned, not only because of their friendship, but because Haile is a diabetic.

In the article Lake said the charges against Haile and ten other Eritrean officials being detained are based on a claim that they had sent "a message to the [Ethiopian] leaders through the peace facilitators asking them if they would be prepared to stop [then current] offensive in exchange for the [Eritrean] president's ouster."

Lake wrote, "This allegation is not only false. It is ludicrous." He then described a blunt-spoken confrontation with the Eritrean ambassador in Washington. "No one asked us to pass such a message. Of course, if they had, we would have refused."

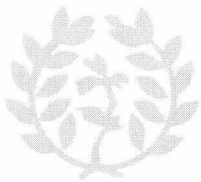
On the advice of "Eritreans and Americans who are sympathetic to the plight of the detainees," Lake chose to keep silent and to wait for justice to be served. "I have waited. And here is what we have seen: No trial. No word. But many more arrests . . . of others who dare speak of democracy in Eritrea."

Lake cited his two-year relationship with Haile Woldensae and his respect for the man, who was "a tough, skilled representative of his country." He was given the nick name "Haile Bulldog." Lake wrote with passion about his feelings for Eritrea, "In my many trips there, I came to love Eritrea and its brave, fiercely independent people. Perhaps it is this admiration for them that leads so many outsiders to remain silent in the face of such outrages."

The ambassador protests

Eritrean Ambassador Girma Asmerom immediately sent a letter to the *Globe* to refute Lake's piece. The letter was edited for space, so the full text was released, "for the record." The letter began, "Anthony Lake's slanderous and baseless assault against Eritrea proves only one thing: he has no shame. As with the case during his mediation efforts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, he is intervening in Eritrea's internal affairs. Clearly, he wants to cover up for his biased mediation activities by besmirching my government and country."

The ambassador admits his nation is "holding a number of people, including former officials, in detention. These are people who committed serious security offenses against our country and people." He states that Lake is wrong in his assertion that Eritrea arrests people advocating democracy and any implication to that end "is a bold faced lie, and an insult to all Eritreans. Nobody is detained in Eritrea for expressing their opinion or criticizing the government Every person familiar with the Eritrea reality knows full well that we are



tolerant (to a fault), fair and fiercely independent minded . . . Eritrea would gladly stand its record of respect for human rights, democratic principles, and economic vision up against any other country in the region.”

The ambassador concluded his lengthy retort by saying Lake was remiss for not mentioning that “his former firm, which he established jointly with some former members of his negotiating team is today doing business in Ethiopia. This very simple fact puts his opinionated and biased article into its sad, proper perspective. I hope Mr. Lake will refrain from meddling in the internal and security affairs in my country.”

Lake's response

Lake pointed to the US State Department's complaints about the same human rights and justice issues he described. “If the US government, the European Union, Amnesty International, and the BBC are all wrong in such charges, then the ambassador's letter is accurate.”

An interview in Asmara with European Commission Rep

In November the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) conducted an interview with Carl Lostelius, who is the European Commission representative in Eritrea. Here are a few of the Qs and As.

Q: “During your time in the country, how successful do you feel the EC has been in meeting its goals?”

A: “During the war with Ethiopia a lot of our development cooperation had to stop. Another obstacle during this period has been the political impasse which has existed between Eritrea and the European Union since the events of last year. This has put some of our development projects on the back burner. In spite of these problems, I think we have delivered. Only for 2002, we have disbursed 25 million Euro. Much of that has been within the emergency and humanitarian fields.”

Q: “How would you characterize relations between the European Commission and the Eritrean government at the moment?”

A: “Relations between the Eritrean government and the commission have been tense since the events last year. We have not always seen eye to eye on a number of issues. Different perceptions of the situation might exist; political dialogue as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement is the instrument to reconcile those different perceptions. Both sides have now made important attempts to improve our relations.”

Q: “What, if anything, can be done, or is being done, to foster a stronger relationship?”

A: “Of late there has been a move from both sides to improve the relations. The European Union has since last month [October] been invited by the Eritrean government for a resumption of the . . . stalled political dialogue.

Q: “What, in the eyes of the EC, are the key structural weaknesses in Eritrea?”

A: “I think Eritrea still has to work pretty hard on a number of issues, like the macro-economic framework, the rate of inflation, a sustainable level of public debt, a strong currency . . . and an improved fertile ground for growth of the private sector . . . Eritrea has many comparative advantages in the world market, including a disciplined labour force and its unique geographical setting, very favorable to the export of goods and services.”

EC and Eritrea sign pact

In November, the Eritrean government and the European Commission signed a Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme that covers five-years of EU cooperative development support for Eritrea, an investment of EUR 96.8 million. EUR 88 million will be designated for post-conflict rehabilitation and demobilization. EUR 8.8 million will be drawn on for other needs, such as emergency assistance, debt relief, and compensation for loss of export earnings. The funds are considered “non-repayable.”

According to the agreement, “post-conflict rehabilitation” includes humanitarian assistance, reconstruction of social and transportation infrastructure, as well as demining efforts. “Demobi-

A UNMEE SOLDIER from Ireland got into serious trouble recently when it was alleged he made a pornographic video that involved a 22-year-old Eritrean woman. According to the BBC's Alex Last, the Eritrean government first broke the story, stating: "To [the soldier] our rich and wise culture is of no interest. What interests him is fooling around and seducing girls to do these filthy acts, recording them and selling them." The woman was jailed and the man brought to courtmartial and sent home. In subsequent interviews, the woman told her story and also detailed names of hotels and prostitutes. This led to numerous arrests and the closing of several hotels and nightclubs that had been frequented by UNMEE forces and other foreigners. The Intercontinental Hotel, Eritrea's only five-star hotel, was named but was not closed, according to Last.

lization" includes civilian population affected by the war, plus reintegration of army veterans and refugees. Long-term strategies are for the sectors of food security, transport and education.

Demining uproar

This past summer, the Eritrean government told the NGOs involved in locating and disarming mines that they were to cease operations in Eritrea by the end of August. The UN followed up on a letter sent by UNICEF and UNDP to extend the deadline so more discussions could be held between the parties or to at least develop "an appropriate transition strategy."

An Eritrean government spokesman said that President Isaias Afwerki had not changed his stand on wanting the NGOs to leave.

Gen. Abrahaley said that the country would have its own Eritrean Demining Authority. "Eritrea lacks demining facilities," he said, "but not capacity."

The five international groups contracted through June 2002 were HALO Trust, Danish Church Aid, Danish Demining Group, Mine Awareness Trust, and RONCO. They were accused by Eritrean Gen. Abrahaley Kifle of "trying to overstay in the country by operating in areas where there are no landmines." He believed that some "are only collecting shrapnel."

According to the UN's IRIN, "the UK-based HALO Trust demining group and the US company RONCO are to stay in Eritrea. HALO Trust . . . says that for the period July 2001-July 2002, it has cleared 2,211 antipersonnel mines, 124 anti-tank mines, 1,495 pieces of unexploded ordinance and has destroyed 8,326 pieces of stray ammunition." HALO cleared one million square meters of suspected contamination land since it commenced in August 2000.

In December, IRIN reported that four HALO workers had been killed by an undiscovered mine. All four were Eritreans. Two others were wounded. "Close analysis of the methodology of clearance of the site has led us to conclude that the Land Rover our employees were driving detonated an anti-tank mine

missed by demining dogs," said HALO's manager of operations in Eritrea. The mine had been laid in 1978 by Eritreans fighting against Ethiopia's Derg.

Regional diplomatic fronts and affronts

Ports

Eritrea has offered Ethiopia access to its Massawa and Assab ports for receipt of food aid. The Eritrean foreign ministry extended the offer as a reflection of its consciousness of obligations in a dire humanitarian crisis. Also included in the proposal statement was the comment that Eritrea "has no desire to penalize destitute populations in Ethiopia for wrongs done by their government."

Ethiopia immediately rejected the offer. "We have no problem with ports," said Minister of State Information Netsanet Asfaw in a Reuters' interview, "Our problem at the moment is that there is not enough food to be transported into the country." She cited the availability of ports in Djibouti and Somalia as being sufficient to the country's inbound needs.

Fishing rights

The Eritrean-Yemini quarrel over fishing rights and the Hanish Islands continues (see *THE HERALD*, spring-summer 2001). The issue was brought before an international tribunal and seemingly settled in 1998. According to the Eritrean interpretation of the decision, Yemen was given sovereignty of the islands, but Eritrea was given singular rights to the Eritrean fishermen's traditional fishing grounds.

Yemen charged that Eritrea was wrong in this view and Yemeni fishermen had the right to fish there. Eritrea took the issue back to court, which issued a statement that noted Yemen's lack of argument in the original case indicated that country's disinterest in the fishing claim. Eritrea still believed that this meant it had sole rights to the fishing grounds. Yemen still argues that it, too, has fishing rights.

Eritrea called upon "Yemeni government leaders to concentrate on bilateral cooperation for mutual benefit rather than squabbling over issues to which a definitive legal conclusion has already been reached."

Yemen calls upon Eritrea to understand correctly the court's decision, and to stop seizing Yemeni fishing boats and arresting the fishermen. "The decisions stated that the two countries' citizens have the full right to traditional fishery in the region."

A tri-partite cabal?

"Well-informed press sources in Sudan have stated that the recent summit meeting in Sanaa [Yemen] held between the Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the Ethiopian Prime Minister Malas Senawi (sic) had resulted in an initial agreement to take all measures including military measures, if necessary, to topple the regime of Asyas Afourki (sic) in Eritrea," stated a press release coming out of Africa.

These same sources asserted that the chiefs of staff of the three nations had met in Ethiopia in October to decide on arming Eritrean opposition. Also in October, according to these sources, the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Khartoum to discuss ways "to maintain coordination between them politically and diplomatically" against the Eritrean regime.

In August, Eritrea's ambassador to Sudan, Abdella Adem was recalled by his government. In September, after telling colleagues he was driving to Eritrea, he boarded a plane to Europe.

The opposition to Maltese deportations

Between September 30-October 1, 105 Eritreans were deported from Malta. A majority were part of a group in Malta whose chartered ship bound in March for Italy had foundered in the Mediterranean, and they had to be rescued.

In early September, the Associated Press reported that they were in a protest that had to be quelled by the firing of rubber-coated bullets into the crowd.

"The immigrants argue that they cannot be held here legally since they were not picked up in Maltese waters," the story reads. "Several were on hunger strikes to push demands that they be allowed to apply for refugee status in Europe and Canada, where they say they have relatives. The

immigrants also want to be given boats to continue their journey to Italy."

According to the AP, there are more than 500 illegal immigrants being held by Malta. The story does not delineate nations-of-origin.

In an article that ran in the *Times of Malta*, it was disclosed that the US-based Eritrean Human Rights Advocacy Group had taken on the immigrants' cause. The EHRA was appealing to the Maltese government to rescind the deportation orders, for it was believed the deportees would face prison upon return to Eritrea.

"Eritrea is now, for all intents and purposes, a police state, run by a brutal dictatorship which treats people who dissent from its policies as enemies of the state," a group spokesperson said.

In all there were 208 people on board the 40-foot fishing boat that went aground in March. EHRA stated that nearly 50 Eritreans had been rejected in appeals to become refugees. The UN commission on refugees had in May declared a cessation of war refugee status for Eritreans since the war with Ethiopia had been over for two years.

Following the deportation of the 105 Eritreans, a London group of Eritreans protested the action. An appeal is being launched to prevent further deportation of remaining Eritreans. "We also appeal to the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, journalists and other institutions to play an active and interventionist role in ensuring the safety of those who have been deported."

Reporters occupy Eritrea's Paris embassy

A number of activists with the French-based Reporters Without Borders, occupied the Eritrean Embassy in Paris on September 18.

"For the past year, we have regularly asked for visas so we can visit [the] imprisoned journalists," said the RWB secretary-general, "but the government stubbornly refuses to allow us into the country."

The group has been constant in its condemnation of the Eritrean government's closing of private

news media and the imprisonment of at least 18 journalists (see past issues of *The Herald*) over a year ago and the absence of court appearances or direct charges.

Editor's note: There has been no subsequent news of the journalists embassy occupation, so it must be assumed to have ended months ago. Also, no news on either the request for visas or the fates of the imprisoned Eritrean journalists.

Literacy award

UNESCO has announced that the International Reading Association has awarded the government of Eritrea its annual Literacy Award. Within the citation's explication, the nation was praised for having "made a dedicated and determined effort over a long period of time under harsh and difficult conditions to build a new nation, remained consistently focused on providing literacy and non-formal education based on local needs [and] taking into account the special needs of all ethnic groups and demobilized soldiers, [and] systematically used desegregated data in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the program."

It was cited that Eritrea had employed 3,000 national service women to serve as adult education facilitators, had opened 30 reading centers, several adult literacy centers, provided radio listening centers in markets, and "provided short-courses in life skills, trained writers to prepare learning materials for adults in eight mother tongues for the literacy centers and rural libraries."

Asmara University expands

In December, Asmara University officially opened a new campus in Halhale, Debub Zoba province. President Isaias Afwerki, who serves as the university's chancellor, declared the campus open on December 21. Classrooms and dormitories will serve 1,000 students. Seven diploma courses and nine certificate courses from the main campus will be transferred to Halhale.

Eritrean airlines will fly

Editor's note: When this article was forwarded to me by the intrepid Shlomo Bachrach, I knew its

information had to be in *The Herald*, but it was presented in such an eccentric style that I still am unsure how to handle it. Purportedly written by "Captain" Asress Araia — the newly named operations manager for the nascent Eritrean Airlines, it is a kind of diary or journal, with a bit of futuristic fiction tossed into the mix:

At a workshop held in May, the building of Eritrea's airline was discussed and planned. Modestly beginning with two medium, wide-body planes, the airline would fly to two European airports, three in Asia, and two or three in Africa. Capt. Asress Araia was selected to be the airline's first manager.

According to his document, a holding company, already an operating entity as Eritrean Airlines, has sales outlets, a financial department, a personnel department, a maintenance department, and "has gained experience as a regional airline quite respectably for over a year."

As a pilot, Capt. Asress noted that, guided by his instincts, to approach the building of an international airline required a certain point of view. "When you are about to test a plane, you try to avoid heavy weight take-offs, because if you encounter technical difficulties, the likelihood of the airplane negotiating the difficulty successfully depends on how light the airplane is, and how favorable the weight-to-power ratio is. This enables you to successfully negotiate unexpected difficulties because you are not maxed out."

With this approach in mind, Capt. Asress provided his opinions on maintenance, the crew, the market, the airplanes, training, and management.

December 19 was determined to be "the launch date," when "we will see the first two Eritrean Airlines airplanes land at Asmara Airport, with their 400+ inaugural passengers."

In January, the airline's pilots and mechanics training schools would open. The maintenance hangar would begin being built early in 2003.

He concludes his article, "At this time, it has become increasingly difficult for the Eritreans at home

and abroad to travel easily to and from Eritrea. This is a plan to make Eritrea as accessible as possible, by linking it with well-connected hubs like Amsterdam, Dubai, and Nairobi . . . This airline . . . is the tool which every Eritrean will use to create wealth, and because this is our mission, we will do whatever it takes to make it happen.”

An editorial postscript: It was announced on December 7 that the first plane of the Eritrean Airlines’ fleet would arrive on December 19. An airlines captain was quoted as saying, “The planes are worth close to \$1 billion at list prices, but it is likely the airline received a discount.”

Capt. Asress, I presume?

The airlines website [under construction]:
er.aixvision.com

Eritrean Orthodox Patriarch dies, successor selected

In September, Abuna Filipos, the first patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church died at 102. In 1993, when Eritrea declared its independence, the church seceded from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and Abuna Filipos was elected to the church’s premier seat. He was anointed in 1998 by the Pope and Patriarch of St. Mark Parish of Alexandria, Egypt.

Filipos was known a leader of honor and dignity, but he was a fierce critic of Italian atrocities during Italy’s occupation, as well as issues when Eritrea was under England’s and Ethiopia’s flags.

His successor, Abuna Yacob, was elected by a unanimous synod within the church. Yacob, 76, had been serving as interim Abuna after Filipos’ death.

It is estimated that nearly one-half of Eritrea’s 3.5 million population are affiliated with the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

Amharic songs banned

Owners of Eritrean bars and music shops have been told they are not to play Amharic (aka Ethiopian) music in public. The music had long been banned on Eritrean radio. A former BBC reporter in Eritrea,

Alex Last, said “songs in Amharic are often about love, while those in the Eritrean language of Tigriña are more often about war and nationalism.”

The last Jews in Eritrea

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s Matthew Cutman filed an interesting story titled, “Citizen Cohen: the Cohen Family are the Last Four Jews in Beleaguered Eritrea.”

In short, Asmara’s synagogue on Haile Mariam Mammo Street, once frequented by Asmara’s Jewish citizens and visited by tourists, is now deserted. Fifty-three-year-old Samuel Cohen is its caretaker.

“The last wedding celebrated in the synagogue was in the ‘60s,” he told the reporter, “and our last rabbi was evacuated along with the great majority of the ex pat community in 1975.”

At its height, Asmara’s Jewish community numbered as many as 500 persons. According to Samuel Cohen, David Cohen’s uncle, Jews once traveled to the synagogue from Khartoum to celebrate the High Holy Days.

“We are locals, but then we’re not local,” Samuel, who holds a UK passport, said. “I suppose this is the plight of Jews everywhere in the Diaspora. We have strong feelings for this country; otherwise we would have left long ago. But we are also anchored here by financial constraints; all of our family assets are here, and we cannot simply sell our house and leave.”

The Cohen family emigrated to Eritrea in the early 1900s from Aden, now Yemen. At first they lived in Massawa until the 1923 earthquake destroyed most of the port city and they moved up to Asmara. Most of the family has long emigrated to Israel, England, and Italy.

The family owns an import-export shop in Asmara, and business is not good. “We are dying here,” said David Cohen. Samuel Cohen holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Bologna but has little to which to apply his degree.

Ethiopia news

Compiled by Hayward Allen (Harar 62–64)

Russian president to visit

Vladimir Putin has scheduled a trip to Ethiopia in August 2003. He will discuss the military, economic and trade cooperation that exists between Russia and Ethiopia. This trip follows the visit of PM Meles Zenawi and an Ethiopian delegation to Russia in 2001. Putin expects to visit several other African countries after he spends time in Ethiopia.

US Ambassador Brazeal arrives

In late November, Ambassador Aurelia E. Brazeal presented her diplomatic credentials to Ethiopian President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Girma Wolde Giorgis. She had been nominated to the post in June and was sworn in five months later.

Before her appointment, Ambassador Brazeal served as the first dean of the Department of State Leadership and Management School from 1999–2002. Previously, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, Ambassador to Kenya from 1993–96, and was the first ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia from 1990–93.

The ambassador is from Atlanta, received a BA from Spelman College, and MIA from Columbia, and did post-graduate work at the JFK School at Harvard.

Addis City Council dissolved

In November, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi announced that the Addis Ababa City Council was kicked out of their offices for incompetence. The ruling body was replaced by a caretaker administration.

For some time, the council had been under fire for its mismanagement of the operations serving three million people. Elections will be held in three years. In the meantime, 20 administrators were appointed to handle the day-to-day civic functions. They

were drawn from the country's four party ruling coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

According to Ethiopian government sources, as reported by the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), the officials were accused of "serious dereliction of duty and inefficiency," and senior staffers were running a "headless administration." The council "had no direction. They did not seem to be doing anything while they were running the administration."

Ethiopian ethnicity

"If you ask Ethiopians what they feel is the single most important issue that affects them today, then sure enough it will be that of ethnicity," writes Nita Bhalla for the UK's *Financial Times*.

The second most populated subSaharan country, after Nigeria, claims around 90 registered ethnic groups, "each with a uniquely different culture, language and way of life." There are 140 recognized languages in Ethiopia. Bhalla asks, "With such diversity, is it possible to get everyone singing from the same hymn sheet?"

She notes that there are those who believe that the current coalition government is doing "exactly the opposite. In 1994, the government . . . adopted the federalist structure . . . This included the fundamental right of self-determination for regions up to and including secession . . . This sounds fair, correct and democratic to the western world. But the feelings of most Ethiopians are quite the opposite." The ruling government is led by an Ethiopian minority of Tigrays. The Oromo people constitute about 40% of the country's population of 65 million. Eritrea went to war to secede, all within the framework of the Ethiopian constitution, particularly Article 39's allowance of withdrawing from the existing federal republic. Since the war and its con-

clusion, other regions have sought independence. There are organized and militaristic separatist movements among the Oromo and the Somali-Ethiopians in the Ogaden. "Lesser skilled and poorly equipped, yet significant secessionist movements are also being formed as disaffected Ethiopians lose faith in disorganized and weak opposition parties to bring about change," Bhalla writes. Recently, she points out, the All Amhara People's Organization has changed its name to the All Ethiopian Unity Party. Its chairman, Hailu Shawel, said the change came as a result of polls the party took. "We have spent months in Ethiopia asking people what they want," he said. "The answer was unity."

OAU now AU

Last July, at a meeting in South Africa, the official name of the Organization of African Unity was changed to the African Union. At an AU ministerial meeting in December in Tripoli, Libya, the officials ruled against Moamar Gaddafi's proposal to move the organization from Addis Ababa to another national capital. It was agreed that the AU summit meeting would be held in Addis in January.

Addis 9/11/2002 bombers held

On Wednesday, September 11, 2002, a bomb was detonated in the Tigray Hotel in the Piazza District of Addis Ababa. Five persons were killed and at least 38 injured. It took at least 60 firefighters from six brigades to put out the blaze that levelled the two-story structure. The place was packed with people celebrating the Ethiopian New Year. It is estimated that the capital cost of the destruction is around \$350,000. "Everything is destroyed," said the hotel's owner, Haile Endeshaw. "There is nothing left." The Tigray Hotel was bombed five years earlier by members of the Oromo Liberation Front.

By September 22, the federal police had arrested five men charged with engineering the explosion. They are members of the OLF, according to the *Ethiopian Reporter*. They were arrested together, along with firearms, explosives, and "incriminating documents." According to testimony released to the media, one of the men was a truck driver who delivered the explosives to another person, who then gave them to two others who assembled the

bomb and delivered it to a final collaborator. It was the latter who planted the explosives in the hotel. According to a report by Nita Bhalla, reporter for the BBC, the five bombers were "ordered to blow up the Tigray Hotel and other hotels, as well as government offices and economic targets." "The culprits used two explosives to blow up the hotel," said Police Commissioner Workeneh Gebayhu, "and we found 18 other explosives in their homes." The five men were shown on Ethiopian television admitting to the crime, according to Bhalla, and "even demonstrating how they planned the bombing operation."

After the explosion, the OLF issued a statement that condemned the attack and denied having any connection to the event. The police showed OLF documents that were found in the men's homes.

Ethiopian Political Currents

The debates

In mid-December, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi took part in the first of a series of debates organized by the independent InterAfrica Group. The public discourse seeks to foster "the culture of debate and the exchange of views between the government and other stakeholders in public policy issues." The initial debate was covered the pro-government Walta Information Center and reported by the UN's IRIN from Nairobi.

In the debate, which appears to be more akin to the American tradition of town meetings, the prime minister was challenged by representatives from the private sector and "civil society" groups. Among the issues discussed was the government's agricultural-based industrial development plan. The opposing view was that land should be privatized and cultivated with modern technologies, and that bank loans should be given to farmers.

Meles defended the plan, declaring that its development strategy was based upon the agricultural domination of the economy, and that land should remain public property. He also responded that drought management and handling of food reserves had been correct and sufficient.

His remarks were denounced by the opposition Oromo Liberation front as grandstanding.

The opposition party, Ethiopia Unity Organization (formerly the All Amhara People's Organization) is boycotting the debates.

The InterAfrica Group intends to hold the gatherings every two months.

Opposition leader speaks out

Beyene Petros is an opposition member of the Ethiopian parliament from the Southern region (SNNPR) and heads the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy. He and others are seeking ways to form a "united front against the current coalition government" — the EPRDF. As reported in an IRIN interview, Beyene says "There is no effective opposition," noting that the official opposition group has nine seats in the 557-member federal parliament, and he noted that there are three other MPs who side with the opposition.

When asked about the small number, he answered, "Take the situation in the south. The EPRDF is totally beaten and the population has rejected them there. Deep inside they are seriously concerned. But we are unable to win seats because of corruption by local officials. The National Election Board is window dressing . . . All the political parties are using their local muscle to stop other parties operating in their areas. We need to stop this. For our MPs to get in power, 20 people were sacrificed, lost their lives in winning those seats."

Beyene believes that the only way to rectify the situation is through changing the electoral process. "All political parties who want to be part of the electoral process should register and must be allowed to register. We are told by European observers if we think the elections are unfair to abstain. But this does not help."

The MP is proposing a conference that involves all the political parties that believe progress and democratization are being blocked by the current government. "This is only for opposition groups," he said. He hopes to have the conference in early 2003. "We need a strategic plan and tactical alli-

ances and targeting certain regions to work as an effective opposition . . . Let's find a minimum common agenda and work from that."

European Union warns Ethiopia

Greek Ambassador to Ethiopia Spyros Aliagas, the current representative of the European Union in Ethiopia, urged the government to realize that the stifling of the voices of the opposition can lead to violence. "The overwhelming majority of the ruling party coalition at all levels of the government does not facilitate a major role of the opposition in parliament and outside," he said in a recent speech in Addis. "The problems of an uneven democratic empowerment in this ethnically diverse country are rising to the surface and could be witnessed by serious incidents [that happened] in the Southern Region..." last year.

"Free and fair elections are the most effective means of achieving this empowerment," he said. The ambassador did note that the EU complimented the government for the prime minister's pledge to achieve judiciary reform as a high priority. And he praised the actions being taken by the government's poverty reduction plans to address the conditions of women.

Finance & Development

Ethiopia's economic picture isn't pretty

Revenue figures down 36.8%

In the fourth quarter of 2001, the Ethiopian government collected about \$33.6 million (2.4 billion birr), which was almost a thirty percent gain over the previous quarter. However, the revenue of the last quarter of 2002 was 36.8% below the revenue of the previous year's final quarter.

According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the revenue from export taxes dropped by 69%, due to the depressed coffee prices globally. Ethiopia's only export tax is tied to coffee. About 68% of domestic revenue is derived from taxes. Something called "counterpart funds" fell to 231.2 million birr from 852.7 million birr the previous year. Import duties accounted for 70% of

revenue collected from indirect taxes. Non-tax revenue showed a 106% gain for the last quarter, but still there was a 44% decline for the year.

Struggle to attract overseas investment

Once upon a time, Ethiopia was attracting \$200 million annually in direct foreign investment, according to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); in 2001 only one-tenth of that amount, \$20 million, was earned. The Eritrea-Ethiopia two-year war is largely responsible, as well as an overall global slowdown in foreign investment, economists pointed out in an article filed by AllAfrica.com and the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks.

The UNCTAD World Investment Report for 2002 noted that Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan "accounted for the lion's share of the total increase," which for sub-Saharan Africa meant \$10 billion in overseas investments. Most of the funds came from the US, France, and the United Kingdom. Sudan, for example, attracted \$574 million in 2001, mostly for oil. The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been critical of Ethiopia, believing the government is stifling overseas investment. ECA's director of economic policy pointed to the failure to introduce broad market reforms. "At the ECA, we have been very concerned about large sections within the Ethiopian economy which are excluded from foreign direct investment," Patrick Asea told the World Investment Report 2002 in Addis. He selected the banking and insurance sectors as places which should be opened up to overseas investors. At this point, the banks and insurance companies are 100% Ethiopian-owned, primarily by the government.

The government's Ethiopian Investment Authority (EIA) defended its policy, saying that the two areas would not be able to compete with foreign funding. EIA Director of Policy, Research and Planning Mohammed Seyed said that EIA's role was to promote Ethiopian investment "until companies are ready to face the rigorous competition from abroad. The government, he said, would continue to reserve banking and insurance investments to Ethiopian investors.

Ethiopia's coffee clutch: a double whammy

"Coffee and Love taste better when hot," so goes an Ethiopian axiom. *Bunna* has long been a staple of Ethiopian life, and also a dominant staple of the nation's agricultural output, both abroad and at home. Sad to say, and tragic in its reality, but the country's coffee crop exports have declined by half.

A USAID report last year indicated that the worldwide decline in coffee prices, having slid 70% since 1998, had hit a 30-year low. According to the report, Ethiopia had lost more than \$167 million in trade, "an amount equivalent to almost half the country's annual export earnings." In the past, coffee accounted for as much as 60% of foreign currency earnings. Approximately 15 million Ethiopians are involved in the crop's cultivation, harvest, and preparation for market.

And now the drought. "In coffee producing areas in western, southwestern, and eastern parts of the country, the coffee harvest is estimated to have declined by 30% in 2002–2003 due to drought," reported the US Famine Early Warning System Network.

Under normal conditions, Ethiopia annually harvests about 300,000 tons, half of which is exported. The nation ranks third among African coffee producing countries, behind Ivory Coast and Uganda. The 2002 export figures had Ethiopia shipping about 130,000 tons, worth \$184 million.

Addis Ababa University Economics Professor Dejene Aredo told an economic conference in Addis that in 2002 alone, the national coffee income fell by \$110 million. Due to the drought and depressed prices, many small farmers are turning from coffee to other crops, like maize and *khat/qat/chat*. Qat is a leafy product that is a mild amphetamine, specifically cathinone. Consumed locally in eastern Ethiopia, its major markets are in Somalia, Djibouti, Yemen and northern Kenya. "A land use shift from coffee to qat has become a progressive trend in eastern Ethiopia," said Zenebe Woldu, of the Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Research, and reported by Reuters, "to the extent

that over 30% of coffee farms in the area would be converted into qat plantations within the next decade.”

In Haraghe Region, in eastern Ethiopia, upwards to 40,000 tons of coffee are harvested annually. “A kilo of a premium Harar coffee fetches 14 birr (\$1.65) compared to 20 birr for a kilo of qat in Harar,” said Tadesse Teshome, a coffee cooperative official in Haraghe.

One giant dam

The construction of a hydroelectric dam in northern Ethiopia has begun. It is being built on the Tekeze River, one of the Nile tributaries that runs through northern Tigray region and into Eritrea. The Tekeze Dam will cost \$224 million and will take five years to complete and will stand more than 600 feet high and generate 300 megawatts of electric power. The dam is being constructed in a joint venture with China, the BBC reports. The China National Water Resources and Hydropower Engineering Corporation that is involved in building China’s Three Gorges Dam, out-bid construction companies from Germany, Italy and Japan. The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation is the co-builder.

In addition to electric power, the dam will channel water to large tracts of land in Tigray.

The reduction of poverty in Ethiopia

Several plans are in the works that are committed to the alleviation of poverty in Ethiopia. Among them is the national government’s own Poverty Reduction Strategy (Ethiopia is one of 14 countries developing such strategies). Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reviewed the official strategy and state that it should “result in substantial progress in Ethiopia’s fight against poverty.” Its reduction targets were considered “ambitious” but “achievable.”

Agricultural development programs specifically received high marks. The government should use the strategy paper as a work-in-process rather than a blueprint, the IMF suggested. The IMF also recommended more local input but added, “The

principal drawback was that consultations served mostly to provide reactions to the government’s existing policies and programs rather than to craft new ones.”

The World Bank’s comments included support of more programs dealing with rural development and food security, private sector development, risk management, and long-term development issues.

In November, Millennium Development Goals, a five-day workshop was held in Addis. Its purpose was to focus on ways to strengthen the role of human development goals in setting out long-term strategies. The workshop, co-sponsored by the World Bank’s Social Pro-Action Human Development Network.

Meanwhile, a national think tank, the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA), was releasing its report on the need for extensive land reform in the country. “The future condition of the rural population of the country does not bear much hope unless bold measures are urgently taken to change the gloomy path of Ethiopian farmers,” the EEA report stated.

At the heart of the matter of land reform is providing access to land so the people are able to feed themselves. Traditionally, the national average of plots dedicated to personal provisions is only one hectare. Not only is this an inadequate amount but it does nothing to factor in the growth of Ethiopia’s population over the past twenty years.

“This has a serious and adverse consequence for the survival of the majority of the rural population, whose livelihood is almost totally dependent on land,” the EEA study asserted. The 157-page report also argues that efforts to increase agricultural productivity have largely failed. At best, some regions may prosper slightly, but there is no cross-country replication of these successful efforts. Also, the increased costs of improved seeds and fertilizers have tended to diminish their use.

“The number of farmers suffering from food insecurity keeps rising,” the report noted, “increasing the country’s dependence on food imports to sustain the livelihood of its population. Furthermore, the

number of people suffering from chronic poverty is also rising." Land reform has been historically controversial. The Derg regime that overthrew Haile Selassie simply had the government take over the land that was owned by what amounted to a feudal system. Now farmers deal with the government-owned land tenure process. The EEA believes that such state ownership "effectively eliminated land policy as a viable instrument that could address changing circumstances that affect the rural economy."

The UN Economic Commission for Africa agrees with the EEA's promotion of land reform for Ethiopia. "Land tenure and governance are among the most pressing areas requiring institutional reforms in Ethiopia," one of its reports stated. "Although the land issue is politically difficult, it needs to be resolved quickly since it impedes the development of several key sectors. EEA advocates a multiple approach to land ownership via an admixture of state, private and communal holdings, as well as "viable farm sizes" to maximize and intensify crop growth and harvests.

A British study, "Destitution in the Northeastern Highlands"

In northern Ethiopia, there is a term used to describe the poorest of the poor, *wuha anfar*, or "those who cook water." A recent research study sponsored by Save the Children United Kingdom and the UK's Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex proposes significant changes in program policies designed to help the *wuha anfar*, as well as others.

Northeastern Ethiopia, the area hit hardest by the 1984 drought and famine, requires "multi-annual" food planning instead of one-time-only programs. This will address both immediate and long-term food needs. The study's conclusions point to something besides emergency actions and reactions.

Families continue to suffer, and it is progressively worsening.

"The need to move away from repeated emergency food aid distributions and to find ways of tackling the longer-term cause of food insecurity in Ethiopia

has long been and widely acknowledged," according to the report. "However, it is less obvious what exactly should be done and how."

The report also echoes the conclusion of the Ethiopian Economic Association that small plot farming is a detriment to investment, for the fundamental absence of productive land ownership diminishes the capability of earning money for food production.

"We are gradually starving to death," one farmer is quoted as saying. "It won't happen in a matter of days or months, but over the years it will happen. What I grow just about feeds me, my wife, and our three children. I have a little left over that I can sometimes sell. Each year we get a little less. When it is a bad year I lose everything. I have nothing left. Each time something goes wrong I have to sell something. I have even sold my tin roof."

He farms one hectare.

Among the study's suggestions are stemming the flow of the destitute to Addis or regional capitals by establishing "growth points" in smaller towns; this is a policy the government is already working on. Another approach is the development of credit savings programs so as to further "asset creation" and employment generation schemes. It also recommends further attention to infrastructural improvements of roads and small-scale local industries and agribusinesses.

Ethiopia's \$3.6 billion aid pledge

In December, a gathering of three dozen representatives of nations, international aid agencies and financial institutions was held in Addis. It was a two-day meeting of the Consultative Group. Pledges in the form of grants and concessional loans totaled \$3.6 billion to be provided Ethiopia over the next three years.

The donors said that debt relief would be necessary to help the country maintain "a sustainable external debt burden in the face of negative movements in interest and exchange rates, and in terms of trade, especially coffee," as reported by the South African Press Association.

The Ethiopian government outlined its Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program, which envisions cutting the country's poverty numbers in half by 2015. This will be achieved by "maintaining microeconomic stability, reducing both urban and rural poverty through agricultural development-led industrialization, improving the enabling environment for private sector development, building human capacity and fighting HIV/AIDS."

The donors also proposed that the Ethiopian government establish an independent auditing firm to supervise the utilization of the funds that will be delivered to the national government. Representatives from Japan, Germany and Canada also recommended the establishment of an independent international auditing firm to oversee the dispensing and utilization of the \$3.6 billion.

Saudi sheik with Ethiopian roots

Sheik Mohammed Hussien Al-Amoudi, born in Ethiopia, was among the 150+ Saudis and members of the royal family allegedly financing Al-Qaeda terrorism, according to Time magazine. Sheik Al-Amoudi denies having any connection with Al-Qaeda or the September 11 attack on the twin towers. The Saudi tycoon's MIDROC Group issued a statement denouncing Time for its "baseless" accusation and the attempt "to undermine the Sheik's development efforts" in Ethiopia, "a country he considers his second home."

Editor's question: Is Sheik Al-Amoudi the same Saudi whose company is building Addis' 50-story building? It is possible that his name was mis-spelled as Sheik "Alamuddin" in a Summer 2002 Herald story based upon a letter to the Addis Tribune that complained about the building of the skyscraper. Can anybody provide the answer?

Nestle not so sweet

In 1975, the revolutionary government that overthrew Haile Selassie nationalized many private, foreign industries. One enterprise taken over by the state was a livestock firm owned by a German subsidiary of the Swiss-based monolithic corporate giant, Nestle.

Twenty-seven years later, Nestle demanded financial compensation from Ethiopia to the amount of \$6 million. "I think it goes way beyond the legal case," a Nestle spokesperson told the BBC. ". . . it is in the interest of the developing countries in general to have a continued flow of foreign direct investment."

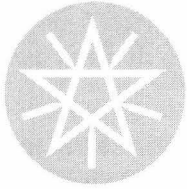
When Oxfam learned of the Nestle demand for restitution and the Ethiopian government's offer to pay \$1.5 million, the food-aid NGO went to work. It wasn't long before the BBC went on the air and England's *Guardian* and the *Sunday Herald* went to press. Oxfam organized a protest in front of Nestle's UK offices.

Nestle's CEO Peter Brabeck was quick to issue a statement that pledged that the money received will be returned to the country in the form of aid to combat the famine. "We are not interested in taking money from Ethiopia when it is in such a desperate state of human need," he stated. The corporate officer also said, however, "We do think it is important for the long-term welfare of the people of Africa that their governments demonstrate a capacity to comply with international law."

The Swiss company's demands, while having a certain validity, were inappropriate and ill-timed in the tragic light of the horrific drought and ongoing conditions of famine in Ethiopia. Another megacorporation spokesperson noted, "We insist that there is a principle at stake here. If any government expropriates a company, it must pay compensation."

In late January, the *Addis Tribune* wrote that Ethiopia agreed to pay Nestle \$750,000 by the end of February, thus leaving a similar amount to be paid within six months. Nestle had agreed to reduce its \$6 million claim to \$1.5 million. "The World Bank . . . is pushing the Ethiopian government to pay not only Nestle's debt, but also other demands estimated to be \$500 million from 40 claimants around the world," the article stated.

A Nestle official in Africa said that the Nestle claim "was fully attributed to the WB's intervention requiring Ethiopia to pay all the claims against it in



order to facilitate [World Bank's] service to Ethiopia."

Nestle has said that it will use the repayment monies for humanitarian aid in Ethiopia, but the check must be deposited in Nestle's Horn of Africa bank account. Development assistance will be in agricultural development and drinking water projects.

The fate of the livestock company Nestle lost — the Ethiopian Livestock Development Company — was one of the government's assets sold off by Mengistu Haile Mariam to finance his escape to exile in Zimbabwe. According to the *Sunday Herald*, the company brought more than \$9 million into Mengistu's coffers. The amount sought from Ethiopia represents "about an hour's turnover for the company."

Last year, Nestle's globe-spanning empire netted more than \$5 billion in profits. Some of the product lines are, after Nestle's candies, Nescafe coffee, Perrier, Friskies pet foods, Libby fruit juices, Opti-Free contact lenses, and of course, milk products like Carnation brands.

Readers of the Herald might recall the last major PR debacle Nestle faced, the one involving baby milk formula in Southeast Asia. Women dressed in faux nurses' uniforms were sent to villages and population centers with free samples of powdered infant milk formula. New mothers were encouraged to supplement and then wean their babies with the drink. The result was disastrous, as babies died because of the weaning and incorrect measuring of the formula, or their mothers discovered they had to buy the product when their free samples were finished. An international boycott of Nestle products followed the scandal, and the Swiss giant still feels the pressure long afterwards.

"This is a company that has said publicly that one of the things it wants to do in the world is to help make poor people better off. This is a company that is trying to squeeze \$6 million out of one of the poorest countries in the world," said an Oxfam director.

Nestle Is not the only compensation seeker

In addition to the Swiss giant's demand for payment due to the nationalization of its Ethiopian factory in the 1970s, there are literally dozens of other industrial and commercial entities seeking restitution or compensation. The World Bank has been appointed by the Ethiopian government to serve as negotiator in the process.

"These claims are surreal," according to a World Bank official. "They are laughable when you consider who the debtor is."

What these, including Nestle's, claims are doing is to create a lose-lose situation for Ethiopia. According to a story in the UK's *Sunday Herald*, the fact that Ethiopia may suffer the deaths of almost one-quarter of its population due to drought and starvation, "the Addis Ababa government holds the apparent moral high grounds. However, the long-term effect of the restitution squabble may be more harmful to Ethiopia than to the foreign claimants. Ethiopia is desperate to attract foreign investment and the current controversy may make potential investors wary of committing money to a country that has nationalized foreign enterprises and then declined to pay compensation."

In Britain, the *Guardian* reported that claimants are demanding as much as \$500 million in payments. Negotiations have been going on for two years with some creditors. "The government has demonstrated its readiness to settle these claims once and for all," Ademnur Juhar, the ministry of finance's chief negotiator told the *Guardian*.

An English lawyer who is handling a number of the claims has even lobbied the US Congress and international donor agencies to suspend aid and loans unless claims are paid in full. Three expatriate parties, the Papassinos family, the Lazadiris family, and shareholders of Bianil Ethiopia are seeking more than \$70 million in restitution. In all, there are 42 claims for the seizure of assets of the Greek business community in Ethiopia. A decade ago, the Italian government agreed to cover most of the compensation claims of expatriate Italians.

High fashion and high altitude cotton

An American clothing designer and an Ethiopian businessman are teaming up to build a clothing line that will utilize Ethiopian cotton and be manufactured there. Gadol Ton and Elias Meshesha recently debuted their first collaborative collection, reported BBC's Damian Zane. The opening show was presented to an assortment of diplomats, Ethiopian and foreign business people.

"Ethiopia has tremendous cotton," said Ton, "one of the best in the world. There are at least four or five mills that produce material from the cotton [and] manufacture cotton twills and denims," The designer believes that fashion could become a multi-million dollar industry in Ethiopia.

Elias Meshesha spent more than two decades working in the American garment business and ran a \$13 million company. He believes that the US market, as well as Europe, is open to clothing designed and manufactured in Ethiopia. He also believes that the recently passed US African Growth and Opportunity Act, which lowers trade barriers on certain products, including textiles.

"The garment industry has not really been discovered in Ethiopia," Elias said. "We are swamped with imports, and we are not too proud of our local products. But that is what we are trying to change. We want to get this negative thinking off the people's minds, especially government officials, and get them to support local industry."

Ethiopian and Israeli issues

Problems with EAL

In December, an EAL flight from Addis to Tel Aviv was diverted to a remote airport in Israel where it underwent security checks. This action was taken, according to United Press International, after the Israeli defense minister told the cabinet that there were "increasing suspicions that the al Qaida terrorist network was behind [the] attempt to shoot down an Israeli passenger plane that took off from Mombassa, Kenya."

The EAL flight carried 54 passengers, most them Israelis; however, one passenger was detained due to a forged Nigerian passport.

The director of the Israeli Aviation Administration said that the flight's diversion was due to lax security at the Addis airport. "We do not make flights [if security] arrangements do not satisfy us," he said.

A week later, an Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, reported that there had been a breakdown in talks between Ethiopia and Israel regarding security procedures. "Ethiopia has refused to accept special security measures demanded by Israel," the reporter stated. "The main point of contention is that due to construction at the airport, passengers to Israel are not isolated after they have completed check-in procedures."

EAL announced that the airline was canceling its bi-weekly flights to Israel. Israel's warning about security at the Addis airport was considered an affront to EAL's long history of secure operations, according to the AllAfrica news agency. In an official statement, EAL noted "This situation caused undue stress and inconvenience to our passengers and crew and has also caused operational irregularities and unexpected additional costs."

Interview with Israeli ambassador

In August, the Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ariel Kerem, completed a four-year stay as his nation's official representative. The *Ethiopian Daily Monitor* conducted an interview with the diplomat just before he left the country.

What did Ambassador Kerem consider the priorities in Ethiopian-Israeli relations? He responded that maintenance of "good, stable relations" was important. Israel seeks to help Ethiopia in areas of development assistance, which included training programs in Ethiopia and in Israel, most recently in the problems of the extensive drought. Another priority lies, he said, in the area of emigration, and the ambassador cited the fact that more than 80,000 Ethiopians had moved to Israel in the past two decades.

Regarding the drought and development assistance, Kerem pointed to the fact that while Ethiopia irrigates only five percent of its irrigable land, "Israel is a country that has made the desert bloom." "Since I came here, [we have tried] to teach more effective technologies for water utilization."

"Ethiopia has 40% of all the cows in Africa. You also have the lowest milk yield . . . Israel is the world leader in milk yield," he said. "The potential is enormous. You could be a rival of a country like New Zealand, which has a huge export of milk products, let alone cows."

The ambassador responded to a question regarding Ethiopian emigration to Israel and its concomitant problems.

"It was a very drastic move from the poor, backward countryside of northern Amhara to a highly developed urban environment in Israel," he said. "When you have large-scale immigration, it is not the first generation, it is only the second or so which become fully productive citizens in their new country."

Kerem cited the second generation's involvement in Israeli education and "then through the army, which is a great leveler in Israeli society," and they therefore have the skills to enter the job market. "We have already had several Israeli-Ethiopians or Ethiopian-Israelis coming here as representatives of Israeli high-tech companies. You find young Ethiopians beginning to take more roles in local politics . . . [and others] doing extremely well in the army, particularly in certain units like the border police, because of their more gentle approach." He also mentioned that there are doctors, scientists, "even one lawyer already."

Kerem was asked about the prospect of Israeli investments in Ethiopia. "There is not much Israeli investment because the investment climate here is not good; it is something this country is beginning to work on." He commented on the "very big deal now between Ethiopian Airlines and Israel aircraft industries." Kerem also pointed to the exportation of teff to Israel for the Ethiopian community for injera, and the fact that 90% of a very popular sesame sauce

comes from Ethiopia. He said that Ethiopia earned \$12 million from teff and sesame seeds alone in 2001 in sales to Israel.

Ethio-Israeli woman running for Knesset

Negist Mengesha is a 49-year-old social worker from Bat Ayin, Israel. Born and raised near Gondar, she emigrated to Israel in 1984, where she graduated from Bar-Illan University and went on to earn a master's degree from Hebrew University. In 1997, she founded Fidel, the Association for Education and Social Integration of Ethiopians. The organization sponsors cultural projects and a family assistance program.

At one time, she hosted a television program geared for Ethiopian immigrants, and she lit a torch as a representative and a leader of the Ethiopian immigrant community in the 50th Anniversary celebration. In 1994, she entered the Knesset elections on a slate of a miniscule women's party.

In the January 2003 elections she ran on the Meretz ticket — a party on the left. Joseph Goell, a columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*, said that although her candidacy is a first in Israeli politics, "an immigrant running on a minor party ticket has attracted little notice." The retired Hebrew University political science professor noted, "The whole Ethiopian issue is much more prominent among liberal American Jews . . . [and] speaks to the sensibilities of left-wing, New Age cultural values."

Negist Mengesha was not elected.

The continuing battle on the church roof

The fight goes on for the shade of a mysterious rooftop tree at Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher, between Ethiopian Orthodox monks and Egyptian priests. As reported in the last issue of *The Herald*, July witnessed the hospitalization of seven monks and four priests after they fought with their fists over the Coptic Father Mallek's placement of a chair and a woman's pinch. The confrontation was due to the long-standing question of who controls what space on the top of the church's top level.

The centuries-old quarrel might be in the "small potatoes and few to a hill" category when it comes

to religious confrontation in the Middle East, but for the holy men and women of the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, it is a matter of principle and civil rights. It is also a source of comic breaks in the clouds of war in Israel.

One month after the fist fight, the Egyptian chair once again entered the scene, according to the "Jerusalem Journal" of the *New York Times*. This time, however, Father Mallek and his chair were guarded by an Israeli policeman, with three more armed officers in nearby reserve. This time, the moment would be recorded on video tape.

There would be no fight, just a group of Ethiopian monks peering around a corner at the priest sitting in the tree's shade. While it cannot be considered an amicable impasse, it is, at least, nonviolent.

Health, education & welfare

Polio eradication on the Horn

Two years ago, there were more than 300 cases of polio annually across Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. Last year only Somalia reported any. The World Health Organization's Polio Eradication Initiative believes that the disease's existence in Africa are numbered, the target date is 2005. The Initiative's director praised the work of national health officials, local medical practitioners, and volunteers who "had on occasion literally dodged bullets to carry out scheduled mass immunization campaigns. However, there are still 22 million children yet to be vaccinated, and the cost of that preventive program will be at least \$50 million.

HIV/AIDS cont'd

The December 22, 2002 the *NY Times Magazine* ran a long story by Melissa Fay Greene, "What Will Become of Africa's AIDS Orphans?" Greene's focus was on Ethiopian children. "The number of AIDS orphans in Ethiopia is estimated at a million," she writes, "most of whom end up living on the streets." She spent considerable time at Addis' Layla House, a special orphanage where a relatively small number of HIV-negative and healthy, parentless children live. Layla House has an adoption connection to the US, "generating interest

among prospective adoptive parents in the United States. [The children] have been plucked out of immeasurable tragedy."

While there, Greene talked with the kids about how they came to be at Layla House. "There is a terrible sameness to the stories. They all head down the same path: the mother's death, then the father's; or Father died, then Mother, then Small Sister, then funny Baby Brother. Alone, bringing out the words of the family's end, a child's eyes fill with tears; the chest fills with sobs. Bedtime is the worst, when all shenanigans die down. At night, ghosts and visions and bad dreams visit the children. Through the open windows, you can hear kids crying in their pillows."

And these are a small group of very lucky children. Greene quotes the executive director of UNICEF, "Almost without exception, children orphaned by AIDS are marginalized, stigmatized, malnourished, uneducated, and psychologically damaged. They are affected by actions over which they have no control and in which they had no part. They deal with the most trauma, face the most dangerous threats and have the least protections. And because of all this, they, too, are very likely to become HIV-positive."

While in Addis, Greene visited another orphans' center, Enat House. It is a different kind of child living there, one who is HIV-positive and very ill. "Some of them have begun to lose their hair," she writes, "others are frighteningly thin; others have facial sores; and all but the babies and toddlers know precisely, in grim detail, what that means."

Enat House is managed by a husband and wife team, Gezahegn Wolde Yohannes and Atsedeweyen Abraham.

Still, the children do children's activities, in art and music classes, and other school-like things, like learning English. "Our little ones think they are going to America like the children in the adoption programs," Atsedeweyen told Greene. As they grow older, they realize that dream will not happen. Although the US does not bar HIV-positive adoptions, the paperwork, she writes, is so intense that "few families step forward for these youngsters."

So, they don't get adopted. They don't get well, either, for there is no medicine for the children. "Medication to fight AIDS is not available," said Gezahegn sadly. Greene describes him as having "the dark, rumpled, bloodshot look of a man who has been up all night; he has wrestled AIDS for a dozen of these small lives already and has had every one of them pulled from his arms."

The couple work constantly to care for the children and to make their days as pleasant as possible, within both their and the children's sad limitations. "We fight pneumonia and small infections," he said. "We are running a hospice program." In what must be a most tragic understatement, he adds, "It is rather hard to see the children dying."

Layla House is run by Adoption Advocates International, which is based in Port Angeles, Washington. Another place, the AFFA House is operated by Americans for African Adoptions. The two institutions placed 100 children in American homes in 2001. There are also adoption agencies from Australia, Canada, and seven European nations represented in Addis.

As Greene's article unfolds, the reader learns that she and her husband adopted five-year-old Helen. Greene went to Ethiopia to meet her and to finalize the adoption. In February 2002, Helen flew to Atlanta to meet her new American parents. "What Will Become of Africa's AIDS Orphans?" is a long, sensitively written article.

In the December 29 *New York Times* there is an op-ed column with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's byline. It is titled "In Africa, AIDS Has a Woman's Face." Annan does not mention specific countries, but does mention the regions of southern Africa and the Horn. In light of the US government's new multi-billion dollar pledge to assist in HIV/AIDS programs, this small column carries much more weight.

Addis Ababa University leadership changes

In mid-December, the president of Addis Ababa University, Dr. Eshetu Woncheko, and two of his top deputies submitted their resignations to the

Ethiopian Ministry of Education. According to the *Ethiopian Reporter*, the decisions were the culmination of a series of AAU protests against government actions, most recently regarding faculty evaluation, which would involve student input.

Prof. Eshetu and his colleagues, Dr. Tetemke Mehari and Dr. Bute Gotu, had met with education ministry officials earlier and were informed that the government was retracting a policy of nonintervention in academic freedom at AAU. AAU faculty openly rejected the evaluation process policy.

The other Ethiopian institutions of higher education all accepted the ministry policy. Following the trio's resignations, a ministry official, Tefera Walwa, spoke to a meeting of the Administrative Board of Higher Institutions and condemned AAU's "negative attitude towards the government [for]... its failure to execute the government's plan."

Subsequently, Prof. Endrias Eshete was appointed to AAU president. Among the candidates for the other two posts are Dr. Mulat Demeke, dean of the faculty of Business and Economics, Dr. Abebe Dinku, dean of the technology department, and Dr. Abubakar Bedri, dean of the School of Medicine.

Ethiomeia, a web publication service (www.ethiomeia.com) has noted that there were other resignations, including that of Dr. Abubakar, as well as the dean of the Department of Science, a faculty member of the Debre Zeit veterinary science campus, another from the School of Post-Graduate Studies, and others from Building Technology and Business and Economics departments.

Editor's note: See previous issues of *The Herald* for articles pertaining to the controversy of academic freedom, the imprisonment or detention of faculty and students, as well as violent government actions taken during student protests.

Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps serves in Ethiopia

The first group of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps volunteers arrived in Ethiopia last fall. The 39 volunteers will work at Bahir Dar University, with the Amhara Education Bureau, and with the Tigre Education Bureau. A second group of 54 TACVs have

been assigned to Addis Ababa University, Jimma University, Alemaya University, Arba Minch Water Technology Institute, Debub University in Dilla, Awassa College of Agriculture, and the Gambella Teachers Education and Health Science College. Others to benefit are the Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's regions.

The TACVs are medical and veterinary doctors and nurses; mechanical, electrical, and chemical engineers; teachers; computer scientists; surveyors; lawyers; and hydrologists.

Religion

Violence in Mekele

In late December, an encounter in Mekele between Ethiopian Orthodox believers and Evangelicals ended with the death of two people. The violence erupted as Orthodox youth sought to break up a legitimate gathering of Evangelical Church members at the Mekele stadium.

According to a BBC report, police tried to stop the youths, who responded by throwing rocks. Police fired into the air to quell the riot. A police spokesman told Damian Zane that the deaths occurred as some officers were pushed over as they fired, thus shooting into the crowd instead of in the air.

It is the second violent confrontation in Mekele. Ten years ago, Orthodox followers fought with Adventists distributing religious tracts door-to-door.

Zane was told that the latest Orthodox reaction came as a result of the belief that an agreement had been violated about no public preaching in Mekele. The church meeting, however, was to have addressed the problems of the drought and HIV/AIDS.

Violence in Addis

BBC reporter Damian Zane also reported on a confrontation between police and hundreds of people outside Lideta Mariam Orthodox Church in Addis. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council filed an accusative report that charged the police with illegally detaining at least 700 people.

"According to the Ethiopian constitution," Zane writes, "anyone arrested must appear in court within 48 hours, but most of the 700 prisoners were detained way beyond this deadline." The EHRC also alleged that some detainees were tortured by having to walk along the road on their knees, or shoeless, or doused with cold water.

The police state that seven officers were injured in the melee, with one hospitalized.

The parishioners of Lideta Mariam were protesting the imposed appointment of a church administrator by the Ethiopian Patriarch. It is a dispute that has gone on for two years; a secular Ethiopian court has ruled in favor of the Patriarch's appointment.

Christian roots in Africa

The presence of Christianity in Africa has been traditionally thought by those unaware of the Coptic Church to have begun in the 15th century as European missionaries traveled there. According to Pat Morrison's article in the *National Catholic Reporter*, there is biblical evidence that an Ethiopian was baptized by the apostle Philip predating the later conversions.

She cites the reference in the eighth chapter of Acts, the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia was given the teachings of the prophets, baptized, and went "on his way rejoicing."

She goes on to describe references to Christianity's foothold in northern Africa in the third century. In 206 A.D. a Carthagian noblewoman, Perpetua, and her slave, Felicity, were among the thousands of Christians martyred by the Romans. A century later, Emperor Diocletian caused hundreds of Christians to be executed in Alexandria. Eusebius, a North African church historian of the time, witnessed their martyrdom and wrote about the horrific killings. In fact, his and others stories became the literary "acts of the martyrs."

Descended from many generations of Christians, St. Augustine was born in 354 in what is now Algeria. As he advanced in the political process, as well as theologically, he advocated leadership diversity

and increased autonomy in provincial churches and dioceses. "When the church of Rome began to imitate the imperialistic top-down style of the empire, Augustine and his fellow African bishops resisted Rome's efforts to encroach on their independence," Morrison writes.

In addition to the coastal states, places like Ethiopia enjoyed "large-scale conversions in the fourth century." This ascendant trend continued for the next three centuries. "It was not until the rise of Islam in the seventh century that Catholic Christianity disappeared progressively across the continent, with the exception of Egypt and Ethiopia," she writes. It took almost one thousand years for Christian inroads into Africa to reopen. "But after Jerusalem, Africa was the earliest center of Christianity," Morrison concludes.

The Boston Globe Axum reports

"This must be the world's only tourist destination where the most famous attraction [the Ark of the Covenant] is something that nobody is allowed to see," wrote Tom Verde in a July article in the *Boston Globe*, "Ethiopian Crossroad, Preserved and Playful."

Because he did not want "to burst into flames," he sought other sights and sites in Axum to write about.

He was very impressed by "the world's tallest obelisks," the tombs and ancient churches. "Otherwise, this seems only another dusty agricultural town set in the sub-Saharan hills of Tigray province."

Axum's place in history, as considered by "contemporary chroniclers," was right up there with "Rome, Persia, and China as one of the four great kingdoms of the ancient world," he writes. He attributes Axum's historical power as being a center of trade of some of the world's greatest riches. "Axum's merchants controlled the flow of most luxury goods between India, Africa, Arabia, and the Mediterranean," he writes. "Gold, emeralds, obsidian, frankincense, myrrh, ebony, ivory, tortoise shells, rhino horn, ostrich feathers, cassia bark — you name it, Axum's kings and its merchant class were about the

only ones between Asia and the Roman world who had it, and they knew it."

There is a Christian key to Axum, besides the Ark of the Covenant. The fourth century King Ezana, converted to Christianity, made Ethiopia the first nation to have a state religion. He had the tallest obelisk or stele erected in his name, and his sculptors and coin makers began to substitute the cross for pagan symbols on the stelae and Axum's currency. "Dozens of such coins, as well as other treasures are on display at the National Museum located inside St. Mary of Zion Church . . . Unfortunately, the contents of many of the display cases are so jumbled they look like the inside of a junk drawer. Still, the museum houses many exquisite items that make it worth visiting, like delicately inlaid jewelry or fluted glass stemware that wouldn't look at all out of place on a Bloomingdale's bridal registry shelf."

In concluding, Verde quotes Edward Gibbon from his epic *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "The Ethiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten."

Not exactly, Verde believes. "For the visitor in the present, Axum of the past is never far away."

Communications

Africa's first Braille newspaper in Ethiopia

Tentatively titled *Ethionews Braille*, the 40-page publication will include a standard diet of news, sports, and health issues. Slated to be launched last December, publisher Emebet Zewde said, "This is the first ever Braille newspaper for Africa." She said that it will offer Ethiopia's 100,000 blind persons access to information they are often excluded from.

The editor-publisher said that although news can be heard on radio and television, the content is often difficult to retain. "With a newspaper, people can refer back to it time and time again. They can use it as an information library. At present the blind have very little information on HIV/AIDS or reproductive health and gender issues. This is a way we can offer information."

She realized the need for a news publication while working as a public relations officer for the Ethiopian National Association for the Blind.

The paper will be free. The publication is looking for sustainable long-term funding.

Phone scam unplugged

Over the past two years, the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation lost more than US\$12 million in service fees for incoming international phone calls. According to the *Ethiopian Reporter's* Kalyesus Bekele, the ETC saw its incoming Sululta satellite calls drop from 600 per day to six.

In December, 22 Ethiopians were arrested and charged with operating illegal telecommunications services.

The scheme was complex in its creation and establishment. According to Kiros Aregawi, a reporter of the Deki-Alula opposition news media, the clandestine operation involved extensive training in the US on the computerized communications system, creation of software specifically designed for use in Ethiopia, the illegal importation of satellite antennae, E-carrier/lines, switchboards and a raft of supporting equipment. In-country training was provided, as well as off-shore accounts for the profits.

Deki-Alula alleges that Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's wife, Azeb Gola, and several leaders of the Amhara National Democratic Movement are "reportedly the ringleaders behind the telephone scam."

Antiquities and an antique

The ongoing saga of the stolen stele

No less than the renowned Italian Ethiopia scholar Angeloa Del Boca has joined the fray about returning the Axum obelisk, expropriated by the Italian army in 1937. And the author of *The Ethiopian War 1935-1941* and a five volume history of the Italians in East Africa is on Ethiopia's side.

Prof. Del Boca wrote a letter to Richard Pankhurst late last year after the issue had been brought up

at the African Union meeting in Durban, South Africa. While he supports the Ethiopian case for the return of the 82-foot 160-ton monument to the ancient culture of Axum, he warned Pankhurst and the Ethiopian people against "excessive optimism."

It seems that those Italians who oppose the monolith's return are gaining strength, especially within the circles of the country's neo- and old-time fascists. The professor was roundly attacked after he wrote an article urging the government to return the stone sculpture immediately. A campaign of dis- and misinformation has been launched.

Among the arguments is the "fact" that Emperor Haile Selassie gave the stele to Italy as a gift. Others facetiously advance the theory that Italy should return nine other obelisks, ones taken from Egypt by the Romans.

The Herald has reported in past editions the positions that Italy should keep the piece because it stands for Il Duce's triumphant and civilizing victory over African barbarism. Another point made was that the stele had "become Italian by naturalization." One government expert has declared that the when the Italians reassembled the Axum obelisk it was more or less made permanent. "I'm just waiting to see the obelisk disintegrate as soon as they try to chop it up to transport it back to Ethiopia," he sneered.

More to come, to be sure, on this diplomatic travesty.

The plane, the plane...

Herald readers may recall the mention of another piece of Ethiopian history lost to Italy: Ethiopia's first-built aeroplane, Aethiopian I. Built in Addis, in 1935, just before the Italian invasion, by the emperor's German pilot, Ludwig Weber. Weber had been brought to Ethiopia as a representative of the Junkers airplane designers and builders. His task was to help establish Ethiopian aviation.

Weber designed three planes based upon a German model built in Freiburg in 1934. One was built.

The airplane was single-winged, powered by a Walter Venus 115 horsepower engine. Its fuselage

was steel, with wings made of wood. The plane was painted with the Ethiopian national colors of green, yellow and red. The emperor christened the plane "Tsehai" after his daughter. Weber took the plane on its maiden flight just after the invasion had begun. It had only 30 hours on its engine when Weber and his crew left Ethiopia, just days before the Italian troops entered Addis.

Left behind, the plane was "captured" by the army and sent to Rome. It first went to a aeronautical museum in Caserta, but was later placed in the Italian Aviation Museum outside Rome.

Ethiopian officials argue that the return of "Tsehai" falls within the wording of the 1947 Italian peace treaty. The Italians are saying very little, it seems.

Ethiopia already has a home built for the historic plane: the new Addis airport designed by French architect Jacques Dubois.

The renovation of imperial palaces

Thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the Austrian government, a feasibility study was done on the potential for restoration of the Menelik Palace in Addis and the Yohannes IV Palace in Makelle, Tigray. Austrian anthropologists documented the value of the sites, the design of a restoration process, its scope, its cost, and the length of time it will take to do over the palaces.

The price tag is \$13.5 million, and the time line, nearly five years.

Menelik Palace was built in 1887, when the city of Addis Ababa was founded. Two years later, Menelik moved in from his kingdom in Shewa to become Ethiopia's emperor. The palace in Makalle was built during the reign of Yohannes IV, between 1872-1889, at the time the city was named the capital of Tigray.

"The renovation of the sites is crucial as both Menelik and Yohannes IV are the ones who laid the foundation of modern Ethiopia, resisting European expansion. Your national pride depends on your cultural heritage," said Austrian team leader Horst Seidler in an *Addis Tribune* article.

Misc.

More on the brain drain

In the last issue of *The Herald*, there was a piece on the loss of as many as 60% of Ethiopia's doctors to positions outside the country. Recently, Addis' *Daily Monitor* reported that Ethiopia has been ranked Numero Uno in Africa's loss of educated, well-trained professionals. Nigeria and Ghana were second and third on the list.

Dr. Meera Sethi, representative of the International Organization for Migration-Ethiopia, bemoans the nation's losses as causing economic and technical stagnation and regression. Dr. Sethi also commented on the fact that once these highly qualified workers leave the country, they rarely return. She cited the 1995-99 studies done through "Return of Qualified African Nationals" that showed that in those five years, only 66 Ethiopian professionals came home after working abroad.

In the study, more than 50% were in the public sector; 12% were women; 33% were involved in education, 11% in agriculture, and five percent in transportation, industry or health sectors.

Addis Ababa University has reported that most of its teachers who AAU sent abroad for further study have chosen to remain outside Ethiopia. One third of doctors have left the country, Dr. Sethi said.

She went on to describe the conditions that tend to affect decisions to work and stay abroad: qualifications of professionals do not match local needs; the length of time to find a job in Ethiopia; poor working conditions; low salaries; the absence of continuing educational opportunities; weak government ownership; and human rights violations.

There is an upside of the "brain drain." Those who live and work outside of Ethiopia continue to send money to their families or to invest in local or national capital issues. The *Daily Monitor* reported that "every year Ethiopian remittance adds up to millions of dollars."

In November, Prof. David Shinn of the Elliott School of International Affairs of George Washington University, addressed the Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association. His subject: "Reversing the Brain Drain in Ethiopia."

"The brain drain has not always been a problem in Ethiopia. The environment created during the Derg government as a result of political persecution and the Red Terror was a major turning point. It caused a significant emigration of highly skilled Ethiopians that continues to the present day, although the reasons for the exodus have changed somewhat," Shinn said.

He describes the reasons for divorce between Ethiopian professionals abroad and their homeland as "push" and "pull" factors. The "push" factors are what seem to force a person to leave his work or his country behind. These elements include human rights violations, political dissension or persecution, war, absence of academic freedom, civil conflict, and ethnic discrimination. Others are entirely economic, such as high unemployment, poverty, collapsing economy, poor health care, and low wages or salaries. Some Shinn calls "mundane" push factors, such as inadequate housing, outdated or broken equipment, minimal libraries, absence of computers or internet access, and personal psychology.

The "pull" factors are, in most cases, just the opposite of the "push" factors, either in the absence of conflicts or the abundance of opportunities. Subtract the "pull" elements and there would be far more individuals who would choose to stay home.

Prof. Shinn is not without hope that the intellectual emigration dilemma Ethiopia has faced and continues to suffer from will gradually turn itself around. Stabilization of the political situation, an improving economy, both professional and monetary incentives, tightening of immigration standards in the recipient countries, grants to improve technical aspects of workplaces, subsidized housing, etc.

He is very supportive of the efforts of Dr. Meera Sethi's organization to help nations cope with and to reverse the loss of trained, skilled people, not

only in Ethiopia but most of the developing nations.

EAL

Ethiopian Airlines has ordered six planes from Boeing: three 737-700s and three 767-300ERs. EAL will also lease six additional planes, including "Next Generation" 737s and 767s. The new aircraft will begin to be delivered in mid-2003. According to Boeing, the agreement with EAL includes "provisions for additional fleet expansion opportunities with Boeing 777 airplanes as a next step in the airline's fleet development program." The financial terms were not disclosed.

PEN award to Ethiopian journalists

International PEN, a global journalists group dedicated to the furthering of worldwide freedom of speech and the press, has named the Ethiopian Free Journalists Association (EFJA) winner of one of two Freedoms to Write Awards.

The EFJA was formed in 1993 as the Ethiopian government tried to restrain the nation's journalists. Between the organization's founding and 1998, more than 200 journalists were arrested and detained. "By 2001, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's government had imprisoned more journalists than any other on the African continent.

Despite harassment, threats, and intimidation, the EFJA continues its cause. In 2000, the organization was given official NGO status by the UN.

The other Freedom to Write Award went to Russian investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya for her coverage of the conflict in Chechnya.

Leelai Demoz, award-winning actor/producer

Leelai Demoz was born in London in 1968 while his linguist father, Abraham Demoz, was teaching at the University of London. Raised for the first six years in Ethiopia, he and his family moved to Chicago in the mid-1970s, when his father began teaching at Northwestern University and headed the Center for African Studies. Leelai's mother, Aster Gebremariam was a trained ethno-musicologist who graduated from SUNY-Potsdam and a potter.

His first acting role was in "A Christmas Carol" — he was seven-years-old. His first TV role came while he was in high school in Chicago. He's been a professional actor ever since."

Acting is something that I have always done, something that I wanted to do, something that I always knew I was going to do," he told an *Addis Tribune* reporter. He has appeared in TV dramas like "Law and Order," and off-Broadway in plays including "The Song of Jacob Zulu," and in films like "The Death of Ivan Illyich."

The film he produced, "On Tip Toe: Gentle Steps to Freedom," was nominated for an Oscar in 2001 in the documentary division. The movie emerged from an association with the South African singing group, Lady Smith Black Mombazo. "The idea was to make a film about the group and how they create their music," he said. "We knew they came from nothing, and soon enough were known the world over, selling millions of records, and they do it with their voices."

Leelai was in Addis for the premiere of "On Tip Toe." The proceeds from the gala opening were to be donated to the children's HIV/AIDS facility, Tesfa Berhan.

He told the *Addis Tribune* that he would like to do a film with an Ethiopian story. "I would like to get a script someone has written from here, so I can shoot, direct and produce it. Ethiopia is a beautiful place to shoot."

Ethiopian athletes defect

Nine athletes left the Ethiopian national team en route to Tunisia for an African athletic competition. While their plane was in Frankfurt, Germany, the five men and four women, got off and did not return. No reasons were given for the defection.

In 2001, three Ethiopian soccer players left their team while it was competing in the Junior World Cup in Argentina. And in 1996, 15 members of the national soccer team did the same in Rome, while on the way to a match in Morocco.

Ethiopians in N. America

In the Bay Area

The Herald was forwarded an article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* that dealt with the burgeoning Ethiopian community in the Bay Area. According to reporter Ryan Kim, there are more Ethiopians in the region than any other African nationality, 4,396 in nine counties, according to the 2000 census. Santa Clara County has nearly 2,000 Ethiopians, and Alameda County, almost 1,500.

"The population has grown in this area, primarily because of the [1990] Diversity Visa," said Tsedey Assefa, program coordinator at Ethiopian Community Services, Inc., in San Jose. "Many people are trying to take advantage of the DV." He estimated that the actual numbers may be as high as four times the census data. "The climate contributes to the immigration here," Assefa said. "It's more similar to Ethiopia."

At Café Colucci on Telegraph Avenue in Oakland, Fetlework Tefferi, the owner of the Ethiopian restaurant, said that her fellow Ethiopians enjoy being in a community where they can speak together, shop together, and celebrate their holidays together. "It's like medicine," said Tesfa Awoke. "You can eat your mom's cooking, you can talk your language, you can meet people."

LA has a new "Little Ethiopia"

Just before Thanksgiving last year, the Ethiopian-American Advocacy Group joined several other groups to sponsor an inauguration celebration on Fairfax Avenue, between Olympic and Whitworth in Los Angeles. The co-host was actress Senait Ashenafi ("Honeybee"), and there were live performances by local musicians, a fashion show, a children's playground,

and the official unveiling of a street sign designating the area "Little Ethiopia."

Citizens League of Ethiopian Americans

A note to *The Herald* from Shlomo Bachrach:

"Thought you might like to know about the Citizens League of Ethiopian Americans. It seems to mark the coming of age of the Ethiopian community here: citizens of Ethiopian origin who organize for the benefit of the home country, acknowledging that they are hyphenated Americans, in the conscious tradition of many/most of us.

"I was invited to speak at their first annual meeting in Palo Alto on the Labor Day weekend, and was impressed with their goals and their approach. They have already offended the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington by getting Congressional signatures on a statement opposing the human rights abuses by the Addis government.

"Other interests include building US support for HIV/AIDS efforts and similar goals. At the meeting, attempts to make speeches about Ethiopian domestic politics were politely turned aside with the comment that this was not the organization for such subjects. The goal of CLEA (spoken as a single word) is to work within the US political system, as US citizens, to promote policies of interest to Ethiopian Americans.

"Interestingly, they invited an Ethiopian Israeli to speak, from the Beta Israel community (Falashas, in our day), who is the first of that community to serve in the Israeli Foreign Service, and was just completing a 6-year tour in the Israeli consulate in Chicago. Their explanation: they want to learn more about how Jewish Americans have developed such effective political leverage despite internal differences. It was a surprising weekend. A number of familiar faces were on the agenda with me, Ted Vestal (PCEth staff: 64-66), [California Insurance Commissioner] John Garamendi (Metu 66-68), Negussay Ayele (who taught Amharic in 4-5 training programs in the 1960s) among them."

For more information: www.ethioamericans.com.

Branna recommended highly

Shlomo has also sent a personal note about an Ethiopian publication: "I have not recommended a particular publication from the Ethiopian/American or Eritrean/American community, because those that I have seen are platforms for particular political views, and hence of interest to a narrow audience of believers.

"*Branna*, a new publication produced in Canada, seems to be an exception, based on their first issue. The magazine covers the arts, for example, more broadly than I have seen elsewhere: a survey of popular music of the past decades by a knowledgeable participant in the scene, an article about a recent Ethiopian feature film, another about a play by Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin, articles about the writers Nega Mezlekia, Camilla Gibb, Tananarive Due. Additional articles cover a curious historical incident involving Virginia Woolf, the rare textile hangings from Gondar . . . and what respectable publication would be without a historical piece by Richard Pankhurst, this one on 'The Loot from Maqdala.'

"*Branna* is well written and edited, which is not always the case with such magazines. They have set a very high standard with this issue, both in content and editing."

Full disclosure: I have never met or spoken with anyone connected with *Branna*. The publisher approached me by email with a request to join the list, and thanked me by sending me the first issue. — *Shlomo*"

Branna's website: www.branna.ca
Write: Branna, 317-207 Bank Street Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2P 2N2
Telephone : (613)293-4596
Fax: (613)233-1056
email: subscription@branna.ca

Editor's note: There is a copy of *Branna* in the EEE RPCVs library.

Two Smithsonian exhibitions of interest

In 2003, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. is presenting traditional and contemporary art of Ethiopia in two special exhibitions.

Traditional church art

"Ethiopian Icons: Faith and Science," on view through Oct. 5, focuses on this art form associated with the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The show reflects two voices — of the curator and the conservator, as they explore the unique imagery of icons from the museum's collection that have recently undergone technical analysis and conservation treatment.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is six religious paintings dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. Several were generously donated to the museum by local collector Ciro R. Taddeo (Addis Ababa 71–73), who collected the works while serving in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia, and his family members.

Contemporary art of the diaspora

The first major exhibition to examine the diversity and significance of contemporary visual arts of the Ethiopian diaspora opened at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art on May 2. "Ethiopian Passages: Dialogues in the Diaspora" continues through October 5.

The exhibition coincides with the 100th anniversary of U.S.-Ethiopia diplomatic relations. It also recognizes the unique role Howard University has played in nurturing Ethiopian artists.

"Ethiopian Passages," which includes paintings, works on paper, sculpture, digital photography and mixed media pieces, brings together the work of 10 contemporary artists working throughout the diaspora. They are: Elisabeth Tariqua Atnafu, Alexander "Skunder" Boghossian, Achameleh Debela, Wosene Kosrof, Julie Mehretu, Aida Muluneh, Etiyé Dimma Poulsen, Mikaël Bethe-Selassié, Kebedech Tekleab and Elizabeth Hapte Wold.

While all the featured artists were born in Ethiopia, they currently live and work in France, Ethiopia, or the United States.

Although their creative approaches, chosen media, artistic narratives and personal histories are eclectic, all 10 artists share an attachment to their homeland. As heirs to many rich artistic traditions these artists contribute to the region's ongoing history of innovative artistic vision.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will produce a full-color catalog, which is being published by Philip Wilson Publishers, London. In it, scholars and artists present a broad overview of Ethiopian contemporary art history, take a closer look at the artists represented in the exhibition, and review the fine arts scene in Addis Ababa today.

Educational programs

The museum has planned a broad range of free, complementary programs on such topics as Ethiopian cuisine, the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, fashion, dance, music and poetry. Documentary and feature films about Ethiopia by Ethiopian filmmakers will be screened. Families will be invited to hear Ethiopian folktales and read books about Ethiopia.

For a complete schedule of public events, call (202) 357-4600 ext. 221 or visit the web site at www.nmfaa.si.edu.

About the museum

The Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art is America's only museum dedicated to the collection, conservation and exhibition of traditional and contemporary African art. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily and admission is free. The museum is located at 950 Independence Ave. S.W., near the Smithsonian Metrorail station on the Blue and Orange lines. For information call (202) 357-4600 or TTY (202) 357-1729, or visit the museum's website at www.nmfaa.si.edu.

WE WENT TO THE "Ethiopian Icons" exhibit and were disappointed by the meagerness, not the quality, of the exhibit.

We were at the Museum of Natural History in NYC today and were impressed by the extent of the Ethiopian basketry, painting and artifacts (even Galla proverbs) that were there. A nice surprise in a less appreciated museum.

— Phil Lilienthal (Addis 65–67)

E&E RPCVs

Several members of E&E RPCVs are working on projects to provide support for the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea, and they invite you to work with them and to support these efforts with a donation.

Computer education in Ethiopia

by Chuck Coskran

(Bede Mariam Lab School, HS University 65-67)

NEAR THE MARKATO IN ADDIS, an aspiring two-year technical college has opened its doors for the first time this fall. The Kunuz College of Kolfe (KCK) is an ambitious undertaking aimed at preparing high school graduates in the following fields of study:

- Computer technology
- Engineering technology
- Office management technology
- Hospitality management technology
- Mechanizing and Entrepreneurship
- Supply chain management

Dr. Negaso Gidada, the former President of Ethiopia, and now a member of the KCK Board of Directors has requested the assistance of former PC/Ethiopia Volunteers in a number of ways.

1. KCK would like to establish partnership relationships with established technical colleges. This could be as simple as a teacher-to-teacher relationship over e-mail, fax or regular mail.
2. KCK is in need of books and related instructional material for the fields of study listed above.
3. The college would welcome both short and long term offers to come to Ethiopia to teach. In this early life of the college, experience with development of technical curriculum would be highly prized.
4. KCK would like to receive funding to purchase instructional material, to help defray shipping costs, and to provide living expenses for volunteer teachers.

The Ethiopian government has encouraged these

private sector efforts to train a technical workforce and has granted a three-year window of tax-free importation of educational material and equipment.

RPCVs who would like additional information, *have ideas on how to help this new college, or would be interested in working with me to explore possibilities for securing a grant(s)* to send experienced members of E&E RPCVs to Ethiopia for short-term teaching assignments and to purchase equipment and books, are urged to contact me.

Chuck Coskran

152 Bank Street

Minneapolis, MN 55414

email: Chuck4199@aol.com

Tel: 612/379-1312

Books for Africa

by Jan Clymer

(Finote Selam 72-74)

BOOKS FOR AFRICA (BFA) is a 15-year-old non-profit based in Minnesota that is dedicated to providing educational materials to African schools. Since 1988, we have sent over 8 million text, library and reference books to 22 African nations, including 24 sea containers to Ethiopia and 4 to Eritrea. We partner with registered non-governmental organizations to receive and distribute the books. We estimate that each container touches the lives of over half a million children, teachers and adult learners.

New and high quality used books are donated to us by schools, libraries, publishers and individuals. They are screened for content and condition by volunteers in our St. Paul warehouse, then packed into 20-foot sea containers to be shipped to our partners in Africa. Each container carries approximately 25,000 books and costs \$8,000 to send. Funding comes from foundations, corporations, individuals, Rotary Clubs, churches and other

VOTE FOR

JIM SOLOMON

(Massawa, Jimma 63-65)

to represent E&E RPCVs on the Board of the National Peace Corps Association.

You should have received a ballot in the mail. Send in your vote by 6/20.

NPCA Annual General Meeting

in Portland, Oregon

August 1-3.

- International Bazaar
- Workshops
- Dance
- Career Fair

For more, see the enclosure

"Peace Corps Party in
Portland!" that came with
you NPCA ballot.

organizations. Members of Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs who wish to donate towards a shipment of books to a particular country or NGO partner can indicate their requests in writing, and all funds will be designated as specified.

For the cost of about 32¢ per book you can help put the tools of empowerment into the hands of a child in Africa. You can donate on-line at www.booksforafrica.org, or send your checks to:

Books For Africa
253 E. 4th St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

For more information, contact Suzanne Koepflinger, BFA Development Director at 651-602-9844 or suzannek-bfa@mtn.org, or visit their website at www.BooksForAfrica.org.

Note: Recently Jan was invited to serve on the Board of BFA.

The Hesperian Foundation

Editor's note: The last issue of The Herald carried a story about the involvement of Lee Gallery (Dire Dawa 64-66) with the Hesperian Foundation's Gratis Book Project. In January, Lee sent us further information, as well as some of reader responses to the article. Here are some of Lee's reactions.

THE UNIQUE ASPECT of our healthcare books is that they are written for those with limited education, make wide use of graphics, have been field-tested by community-based health workers all over the world, and are written to encourage ordinary villagers [that they] can take control over the causes, as well as the effects, of poor health in their communities.

I had a wonderful email from Michael Santarelli (Gura 70-73) who worked for the World Health Organization in the smallpox eradication project and lives here in California. He still has his old copy of *Where There Is No Doctor* from the early 70s

when he was in Gurage country, thought it was terrific and gave a generous donation for us to [send] books to Ethiopia." Michael suggested that the Amharic edition of *No Doctor* be sent.

There were only English and Spanish versions of our books in Berkeley; foreign-language editions are only available from the local publishers in-country — so can't be sent through us and our Gratis Book Project.

There are three sources for Ethiopian and Amharic, Tigre and Tigrinya editions: 1) an adapted Ethiopian version of the English one through Yasser Bagersh, Shama Publishing Co., PO Box 8153, Addis Ababa; 2) in Amharic version with Tena Abere, Hiwot Translation and Secretarial Service, PO Box 13591, Addis, email: tenabet@telecom.net.et; the Tigre and Tigrinya editions through Nerayo Teklemichael, Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, PO Box 1098, Asmara.

On a personal note, I found a former Ethiopian student of mine right here in San Francisco. When two of his sons attended Mass one morning . . . I recognized them as Ethiopians and introduced myself . . . Two hours later, their father called and said he had been a student of mine at Prince Makonnen Haile Selassie Secondary School [in Dire Dawa]. He had to leave with his family due to the political situation and is very active in the Ethiopian exile community here."

Email addresses: leelgallery@cs.com. For more about the Gratis Book Project, go to www.hesperian.org.

A letter of appreciation from Ethiopia

Dear the Concerning Bodies of Hesperian Foundation,

How do you do? I am fine, thanks. I am one of your users who received all the books you sent. How much your books have been of value to me? I want to tell you one way.

In my health center there is no physician. Due to this problem we nurses and health assistants do our duty as much as possible. There is one health worker that has done

Looking for mug books

EGE RPCVs continues to try to build the definitive list of PCVs who served in Ethiopia and Eritrea. We need the training books for the following groups:

II 63-63
V 65-67
VI UCLA 65-67
VII UCLA 66-68
VIII Littleton 67-69
VIII UCLA 67-69
VIII Utah 67-69
X St. Croix 68-70
XIII 70-72
XVII 72-74
XVIII 72-74

We have none for the reentry groups. Did those groups have training books listing all the trainees?

Please send photocopies or originals to:

Marian Haley Beil
4 Lodge Pole Road
Pittsford NY 14534

You can be reimbursed for copy and postage costs.

Thanks!

dental extraction. He doesn't know where anesthetic is given and what kind of teeth is pulled out. Simply if one patient complains of toothache or other problems, he pulled out by force. It is painful and hard. When you sent me **Where There Is No Dentist**, I read deeply and know where anesthesia is given and what kind of teeth should be pulled out. Then I got one patient that had a dental abscess. I gave the anesthetic in a good nerve site and used the proper extraction materials. I pulled correct teeth and without any pain. My staff admired everything that happened. But I told them that it is the result of the Hesperian Foundation. Now all my staff has good knowledge about how to remove bad teeth. So your foundation is our strength. Thank you.

Tarekegn Asmamaw
Estie, South Gondar, Ethiopia, 1/4/03

Other projects of interest

American Red Cross' Measles Partnership

by Gerry Jones (Dessie, Debre Berhan 67-71, 72), Director of International Relief Development, Red Cross

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS' Measles Partnership aims to wipe out the number one vaccine preventable killer of children under five-year-olds (450,000 child deaths per year). In partnership with CDC, United Nations Foundation, WHO, UNICEF and various Ministries of Health, this program is an enormous humanitarian step forward.

Later this year we will launch the Measles Campaign throughout Eritrea and parts of Ethiopia (because of its size and population, Ethiopia will take two or three years to complete). for more information, visit our site at www.measlesinitiative.org/index3.asp

WorldCamps project

In the spring of 1966, Phil Lilienthal (Addis 65-67) was approached by staff members Jane Campbell and John Coyne to do a summer camp as a project.

He started Camp Langano, which ran for the two summers he was there and continued under the auspices of the YMCA until the revolution of 1974.

Phil, a lawyer whose father owned a summer camp in Maine, combined a career in law with running this camp after his father's death in 1974. Phil's oldest son, Andy (PCV Honduras 1992-94) is now running the camp in Maine, and Phil is returning to Africa with a project aimed at bringing summer camps to African countries.

He has set up a non-profit, non-governmental organization which will have a 5-year program involvement in a country. One person with experience in camping and/or the world of international organizations will work with a director-designate in-country to select the site, hire and train the staff, recruit the children and raise money to support the camp. The staff will work the first summer and the director-designate and certain key staff will go the USA the second summer for further training in US camps. They will return and then form the nucleus of the WorldCamp in their country.

It is expected that a camp will reach a level of sustainability by Year 5. But camps in other countries will be organized after Year 2.

Funds will come from organizations involved with children, Africa, and HIV/AIDS, as well as community organizations and schools.

The program for children will be from families affected by AIDS will include sports and games, swimming if conditions allow, public health and cross-cultural activities that will promote storytelling, songs, and games that will be shared across tribal and regional lines.

Phil will be in Africa in May 2003 doing site selection for the first camp.

Parents International Ethiopia
from Sara Vaill

Based in Santa Monica, CA, Parents International Ethiopia (PIE) is a nonprofit organization that provides support to women in Ethiopia and their

families for their efforts to eradicate female genital excision (FGE) and other harmful customary practices against women, and to build healthy, sustainable communities. PIE works with the Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center (KMC) in Durame*, Ethiopia, in three program areas: women's health (including FGE and HIV/AIDS prevention), livelihood, and environment. By means of informational events, the KMC website [under construction], print and other media in the United States, PIE raises public awareness about harmful customary practices and promotes the support of innovative, practical solutions being carried out locally by women in their own rural communities in Ethiopia.

Our Board and I have long desired to connect with the community of Peace Corps Volunteers who have returned from Ethiopia and are living in Los Angeles. If you are interested in our work, please contact me at: PIE, 2901 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 201, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 396-2827; pie.kmg@verizon.net

* Durame is about 220 km SSW of Addis in the Lake Region between Hosanna and Boditi.

New at www.EthiopiaEritreaRPCVs.org

- You can now do a Google Search at the site. There is a [Search](#) link at the bottom of each page.
- In the Stories section: "Lest the Event Becomes the Person: Bill Olson (Adi Ugri 65-66)" Recollections and reflections of his friend by Wayne Handlos (Addis Ababa 62-64)
- In the Stories section: "Such Friends" celebrates John Wood's (Jimma 65-68) long-term friendships from Ethiopia.
- In the Stories section: "Going Back" by John Kulczykcki (63-65), photos by Scott Morgan (64-66) tells of the trip back to Ethiopia made by Debre Zeit friends John Goulet (64-66), , and and his wife, Regina.
- Photos from the 40+1 by Mike Brady, Don Beil, Neil Boyer, Lee Atkins Desta and Lois Shoemaker.

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs Cash Flow Report

1/1/02 through 12/31/02

Income

Dues	2,180.00	
Dues rebated from NPCA		4,097.50
Dues rebated to NPCA		-1,217.50
Conference 2002		
Emb din	5,265.00	
Eth 1 reunion	890.00	
Total Conf 2002 rcd		6,155.00
Gifts		1,010.00
Hat sales		239.00
Total Income		12,464.00

Expenses

Bank charges		154.67
Conference 2002		
Emb din	5,595.82	
Eth 1 reunion	774.95	
Total Conference 2002		6,370.77
Hats		104.00
Library		182.30
Postage		543.90
Reproduction		543.14
Supplies		60.31
The Herald:		
Postage	1,418.00	
Reproduction	3,504.64	
Other	85.56	
Total The Herald		5,008.20
Website		88.84
Total Expenses		13,056.13

Total Income/Expenses **-592.13**

Me: A Fashion Trendsetter?

by Laurie Kessler (Adi Teclesan 64–66)

WHEN I WENT TO ASMARA the second time after Liberation in 1994, Rishan told me very matter-of-factly, “Laurie, we admire the way you dress. You dress like a missionary.” I thanked her politely while wondering if I welcomed her comment as a compliment. When I mentioned it to Colin, he said, “It’s true, Mother. You dress so as not to offend ANYONE.”

True, indeed: nothing sleeveless (even in hot Keren and Massawa), nothing tight, skirts long enough so I wear knee-highs with them, comfortable flat shoes. And, except in the house, I never look scruffy, as I thought one European female university colleague did in t-shirts and jeans.

And so, I’ve had other compliments. An Indian man in the English Department at the University remarked, “Today you are very nicely clad,” when I wore my pink skirt, pink blouse, and the brown and pink corduroy jacket I had made. An Eritrean woman in the department always said how much she liked the navy blue cotton dress with a small white print — one my mother bought for herself in Thailand. A professor visiting from California for a month, noticing me at a distance downtown, referred to my skirt as “electric blue.” I took it as a compliment, but, since she wore only black and grey, perhaps she thought it was excessively bright. Perhaps, also, her nicely styled travel clothes did not represent the range of colors in her wardrobe at home.

A Baha’i woman once identified that electric blue as “Laurie’s color.” A woman in my English class at

UNDP [United Nations Development Programme,] said she didn’t like the electric blue — this time in trousers — because she had had to wear that color as a uniform during the Derg regime. She and the other two women in that class frequently praised the colors and fabrics of my clothes. They were surprised and impressed when I identified different outfits as being from thrift shops in California or sewn by myself. First I had to explain what a thrift shop is, then they asked me to teach them sewing!

But most of the comments were about how my colors matched. The first, offered by the female fighters I was teaching in 1994 — who would talk about anything — was actually a question, asking me WHY I wore green trousers, a green striped shirt, green earrings, green-rimmed glasses, and a green sweater. Since it seemed more like an accusation, I was unsure how to answer. Could I say, “That’s the point, to match the colors” to women who wore all sorts clashing colors and prints with plaids, thinking they were dressing “in fashion”?

Gadzooks! I was brought up by my mother to coordinate colors, and I vividly remember a shopping trip when she suggested a blue sweater that would go with a plaid skirt I already had. She also let me buy “flats” to match my outfits. Seventeen magazine and The American Girl ran features on outfits and coordinating colors. How could I escape the point?

So, I continued to think, “That’s the point,” when a friend commented on my coordinated colors.

While giving a presentation to EEE RPCVs at the Austin conference in 1997, Laurie wore her coral turtle-neck, coral skirt, and purple and lavender shawl with coral trim.



Three Eritrean women University colleagues often remarked how nicely my colors went together. Two of them were nearly always equally coordinated; one day the other wore three different plaids — all involving brown, her version of matching!

At weekly Baha'i gatherings, the women often called attention to my outfits — the pink one, a lavender blouse with a certain vest or with the jumper I made for it, the blue and yellow blouse with the yellow jacket, the skirt with red peppers and a red blouse and red scarf. In fact, I bought the scarf because I liked the one worn by Desta, my special Baha'i friend. She took me shopping for the scarf, and once she chose a tiny coffee cup to match my multi-flowered skirt.

If "that's the point" and my friends noticed, was I a fashion trendsetter? The border on Desta's netsela always matched the clothes she wore, but that didn't seem to be a change for her. A secretary at the university sometimes asked me if her blouses, skirts, and sweaters were good together, and I once suggested that the red sweater would be nice with the grey plaid skirt (rather than the brown and gold one). Apparently, I had a little influence.

But, by the time we left Eritrea, I was still waiting for someone to notice how the little squares of turquoise on my earrings went so well with four plaid shirts. Is that how missionaries dress? I never noticed.

This is about us

Editor's Thank-you Note: It was extremely gratifying to have such a positive response to my plea for notes from you all in the last issue of *The Herald*. Readers sent in a number of personal reflections and recollections. Hopefully, these will prime your pump and we'll get more news about you this year. My sincere thanks to you all.

The high note in Bell's long recovery

The following is an edited version of an article that appeared in the Amherst (MA) Gazette written by a staff reporter, Siobhan Skye Rohde, in December:

Anyone who has suffered a stroke knows what recovery entails: constant body and speech exercises and a lot of frustration while learning to communicate all over again. For **Ron Bell** [Dessie 62–65], recovery includes eBay. Bell, the assistant superintendent of the Amherst regional school system for the last 29 years, goes online regularly these days to find old trumpets.

So far he has bought five, including a baroque herald trumpet he can play with one hand. When he plays this trumpet, he changes notes by moving his lips rather than by pressing valves. "That gives him a chance to work on it a little bit, because with his hand, he can't use the valve trumpet," said **Liz Bell** [Dessie 63–65]. The fact that Bell, a lifelong trumpeter, can play his new instrument at all is a major accomplishment. A year and a half ago he suffered a stroke that left him unable to speak or move his right side.

The Bells, both 64, say they face a struggle of mind over matter and possibility over negativity every day as they work to restore Ron Bell's health and energy and return him to his office. After Ron Bell suffered his stroke in June 2001, he spent a week at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton before transferring to the Weldon Rehabilitation Center at Mercy Hospital in Springfield for five weeks. He continued as an outpatient there until October 2001, when physical therapists told the Bells they had done as much as they could.

Since then, the couple has returned occasionally to the center for re-evaluations. They continue to visit the occupational therapist, who works on Ron Bell's arm, and the physical therapist, who works on his leg. Ron Bell can lift his right arm now, first settling it on his lap, then slowly squeezing his fingers and pulling upward. The therapists just gave them new exercises to add to the regimen that Liz Bell has collected in a binder, where she also keeps track of her husband's workout schedule and his speech homework.

Since mid-November, Ron Bell has attended a cardiopulmonary exercise program two afternoons a week at Cooley Dickinson, where he walks on the treadmill and works arm and leg muscles. He wears a mitt strapped to the upper body machines because he still has trouble gripping the handles. Graduate students training at the University of Massachusetts Speech and Hearing Center to be speech therapists have worked with Ron Bell regularly since October 2001.

"It's been a good match because it gives them an opportunity to do a practicum and it's very helpful to him," Liz Bell said, gesturing toward her husband. "It's been very helpful to have the structure and the resources they have. I can do the exercises for his arm and his leg, but speech is a very complex thing."

"It's fascinating to me how complex language is," she said. "And when it's been interrupted like this, it's the little words —"

"It's the little words," he affirmed.

Ron Bell wants to be back at work as soon as he can. He has attended building committee meetings since January and travels with friends to different schools to keep track of progress on building projects like those at Crocker Farm Elementary School and Pelham Elementary School, which he helped plan before his stroke.

"I want to keep up business as usual," he said.

When asked his plans for 2003, he didn't hesitate. "(By) May, I would be back to work," he said. His longing was palpable, despite his struggle to move

words from mind to mouth. "I was missing all the kids. And staff."

"We miss him greatly," said Gus Sayer, superintendent of the Amherst schools. "Ron has been more than a right-hand man. He's always had a good sense of the community, the ability to see things clearly, the ability to put things into perspective and is always willing to pitch in on any problem. He has been a wonderful person to collaborate with all these years."

Liz Bell said she and Ron feel blessed by the support of their many friends and neighbors. "People who have stayed in touch from Michigan, the Peace Corps years, different times in your life. People come by, and it helps get us through."

Regular attendance at Wesley United Methodist Church brings additional comfort and strength. Ron Bell has been at church every week but one since Palm Sunday. He likes to answer e-mail occasionally too, as an old friend, a retired trumpet player in the Baltimore Symphony, recently learned when he wrote a long letter and received it back, along with yeses and nos and ohs in response to his concerns.

Ron can be contacted at rbell@crocker.com or 60 Grantwood Drive, Amherst MA 01002.

Rev. John Rex

The following is an edited article written by Ron Wiggins, Palm Beach Post staff columnist; it appeared in December:

By the age of 50, **John Rex** [Debre Berhan 62-64] knew what he wanted to be when he grew up: a minister in the Unitarian Universalist Church. For 27 years, Rex, now 62 and minister for the First Unitarian Church of Palm Beach County, had been almost what he wanted to be all along: a schoolteacher. Close, but no halo. He quit and went to seminary.

"Much of our lives," he explained in a recent sermon, "we assume identities that are not consistent with our real gifts."

Rex, a scholarly balding man with a swimmer's physique, chuckles tolerantly. "I was raised Episcopalian, and I've always been spiritual. When I

graduated as a psychology major at Bowdoin College in Maine, I decided I wanted to be a priest."

First, you have to talk to a local priest and answer some questions. "My answers suggested I was not quite on the right wavelength for the job."

This, said Rex, was back in 1962, when the Peace Corps was starting. Rex had read *The Ugly American*, an indictment of America's often heavy-handed foreign policy failures, and signed on with a group of fellow young idealists bound for Ethiopia.

"We were a big group — 300 or so, including Paul Tsongas. The theory at the time was that kids fortified with American ideals and a college degree can be taught to do about anything on short notice."

In short order, Rex was headed for an Ethiopian community, where he would teach English to Muslim ninth-graders. Immersion in Islamic culture taught him to take his own cultural assumptions with a pillar of salt: "It hit me that if I had been born in Ethiopia, I'd be Muslim. So much that we take for granted about ourselves is dictated by our upbringing rather than decision."

[When he returned to the US,] he got a job teaching English 7-12, married a Catholic in 1968, and together they begat a boy and a girl. In respect of his wife's religion, he attended Catholic Church for a while. "It just didn't work for me. I started to look around."

[One of his explorations introduced Unitarianism to him, and he became involved.] Soon he was running summer camp programs and serving his church as religious education director in Williamsville, N.Y.

Enjoyment in a line of work is not always vocation, and in 1990 he retired from the New York school system with a plan to find what had been missing in his life.

"I wanted to go into the ministry. It was a huge leap."

That leap widened the philosophical gap in the family, and a divorce followed. He enrolled in the

Starr-King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, Calif.

"I loved being in seminary. It was a great breath of fresh air. It was here that I knew I had found a way to honor my gifts. No longer would I be forcing myself into a mold."

His training took him to India, where he taught English to theistic Hindus and volunteered with Mother Teresa's mission to street children. In Kharang Village in northeastern India he taught and left behind a legacy — made possible by the death of his son, Christopher.

"There was some insurance money and a need. Female students could not attend a school from outlying areas without a dormitory. The money built the Christopher Rex Hostel."

Freshly frocked but without a flock in 1995, Rex returned to find part-time jobs in Fredericksburg, Va., and Jacksonville. Finally, he could preach what he practiced.

"Ours is not an easy religion. Because we don't give ready answers and we don't have creeds or doctrines as such, we put a lot on the individual. We ask our members to accept personal responsibility. We do take strong stands on social issues such as reproductive choice and gay and lesbian rights."

After the death of Roger Cowen, for many years minister of the [Palm Beach] First Unitarian Church, Rex was elected minister in September 2001.

Last Sunday he spoke on a subject dear to his soul: vocation, not as a goal "but as a gift to be received." If you can unwrap it after high school or college, so much the better. He could cite one case in which patience is rewarded. Quoting Parker J. Palmer, a Quaker teacher and writer, Rex declared

"What a long time it can take to become the person one has always been! How often in the process we mask ourselves in faces that are not our own."

Editor's note: In February, John announced that he was retiring from his post at the First Unitarian Church.

Facilitate reconnecting

with friends. Make sure

EEE RPCVs has your email

address.

Send to:

mhbeil@rochester.rr.com

Memories from Fran Williams Davidson

In addition to three excellent books — gifts to the EEE RPCVs library and ones her father had on his shelves — (see page 52) **Fran Williams Davidson** (Addis 65–67) sent along some autobiographical notes: She and her husband Jack live in San Luis Obispo, Cal. They raised six children. The youngest is a sophomore in college. “For the past 24 years, I have run the family educational film company, producing and marketing videos in the area of psychology and education for college level courses.”

In addition, she sent along a reminiscence prompted by her putting away the Christmas decorations, which included “precious relics from my two Ethiopian Christmases.” Here are some excerpts:

“In 1965, I was in Addis, living in a pretty Italian villa with **Sheila Powers Nesse** and **Gussie [Dorothy] Gustafson**. About a month before Christmas, the diplomatic community put on a wonderful fair to benefit the Red Cross. It was held in a polo field near the British Embassy, as I remember. It was splendid with each delegation representing their culture and products in different ways. I especially remember the elegant French “sidewalk café” and the machinery-themed booth for Rumania that also sold wonderful jams. We’d been in the country a few months but already were yearning for special sweets and treats. Our household was critical of the US booth that I recall sold tee shirts and hamburgers, but it was popular with others. It was at the Swedish booth that I spent most of my limited funds for wooden Christmas ornaments. The pink angel with yarn hair I bought there is now looking a bit seedy but is precious to me.

“In December, we did find a tree and hung it with our Swedish decorations and some paper ones we made, but it did look a bit sparse. Our haughty *tillik sew* landlord lived next door, separated from us by a high metal fence. We had only seen him on rent day, and to our amazement on December 25, he sent a daughter over with presents. Rather gaudy “silver” jewelry with great red “stones.” We quickly dismantled these and made them into ornaments. My share of these still graces our annual tree.

“In 1966, **Clare Shea** [65–67] had graciously agreed to let me share her life in Debra Marcos Away from the international air of Addis, our Christmas preparations were much more modest and home-made. **Sally Lockwood** [65–67], resident nurturer to us all, gathered ingredients for weeks in order that we have traditional cookies. (Remember how valued canned butter was outside Addis?) Our students were fascinated by our preparations. Some of the girls gave us coaster-sized basket ‘samplers’ which have since been treasured Christmas tree ornaments. As I remember, we taught on December 25, but the Peace Corps contingent gathered with the resident Bulgarian doctors for a potluck dinner that night, featuring athletic chickens who had been sacrificed that day and cooked for hours in an attempt to tenderize them. I think we also had Danish ham from someone, probably **John Coyne** [62–64; Staff: 65–67] had brought up from Addis for us.”

Editor’s note: The Herald will run the second half of Fran’s reminiscences in the next issue. But readers, hark! We would love your memories, too . . .

News from Chartran

Bill Chartran (Bahr Dar 64–66) responded with news of his life and his interest in returning to Ethiopia. “I am . . . now retired from college teaching (interpersonal, family and intercultural communication) Now that I have retired, I currently volunteer for a local organization, Open Arms of Minnesota, here in Minneapolis that delivers meals-on-wheels to persons affected by HIV/AIDS I have tried unsuccessfully to connect with Ethiopian organizations ministering to the needs of HIV/AIDS persons I am interested in returning to Ethiopia to do some volunteer work with HIV/AIDS.”

In a subsequent email, after I had suggested he read a *NY Times* article (see this issue of the Herald, “HIV/AIDS cont’d”) Bill referred to work he had done after returning from the Peace Corps, “I worked for five years in a private social work agency in Minneapolis in their intercultural adoption program, while completing my PhD program and dissertation on the adoption of Korean kids into Minnesota homes. While it is nice to know there are

a few programs placing Ethi kids in adoptive homes abroad, I must confess my apprehension regarding the preparations these adoptive families receive regarding the uniqueness of adopting foreign-born kids into American homes. Of course, if Ethiopia and Eritrean RPCVs sought to adopt, that's a different story, but without adequate preparation of the potential adoptive parents, I worry for the future cultural identities and possible mental health of these kids."

Bill's email address: willrog6842@earthlink.net.

A Note, Too, from Jim Friberg

Jim Friberg (Asella 62-64) who is working as a massage therapist in Portland, OR writes: "For the last 12 months, I have been aggressively studying 'Christian Healing Prayer.' . . . I would love to hear from any other returned volunteers who are interested in the Healing Power of Prayer. I no longer need insulin for diabetes. I am doing more exercise and watching my intake of food . . . I attribute my healing to receiving prayer from other Christians and learning more about praying for my own healing . . ."

"Right at the moment, I am trying to raise money for a program called Polio Plus. It is a joint effort between Rotary International, World Health Organization, UNICEF, Center for Disease Control, the Bill Gates Foundation, and several other organizations. The map of live cases reported in the world seems to be down to seven countries, including Ethiopia and India [see this *Herald's* article, "Ethiopian News"].."

"I am renewing my membership for three years. The [Herald] by itself is worth it.."

Jim's email address: jfriberg@pacifier.com

A message relayed from John Davis

One weekend late last year, **Peggy** and **John Davis** (Gondar 62-64) visited **Marty Benjamin** in Michigan. "While there, we called some of the other 'Gondar 12,' **Jack [Prebis], Frank [Mason], Trish [Martin-Jenkins Hartwell]** and **Charlie Callahan** (all Gondar 62-64) . . . it was a real joy to talk to Charlie. I hadn't talked to him in 38 years.

"The good news is that he worked for VISTA after Peace Corps and met his wife. He then spent 35 years working in child abuse jobs. He has two children, two grandchildren.

"The bad news is that a year or so ago, he had a growth on his spinal cord and as a result, is now paralyzed from the waist down. He is in a special care facility and is regaining some feeling in his knees.

"The thing we can all learn from Charlie is that he is so happy, so positive, upbeat about it all. He is thankful for the gift of each day . . ."

"It's kinda like we've got our own Christopher Reeve."

John extends to all who recall, as those who care, to contact Charlie, one way or another. His home address: 1522 36th St., Rock Island, IL 61201. His special care phone: 309-786-8162.

John wrote that the Gondar Dozen are *looking for a group photo in somebody's collection*. He is also searching for other data and is coming across very interesting stuff. "Oddly enough we're also having 'reconnect' movements with our college class, folks we taught with in Alaska, and my South Pole '99 winter-over. Guess we're getting sentimental in our old age."

John's email address: jwdavis37@yahoo.com.

Joe Tenn remembers O'Herron

In the last *Herald*, the editorial mentioned a communiqué from Terry O'Herron (Addis/Keren 62-64) and a search for old buddies, including Joe Tenn (Addis 62-64). Joe attended the 40+ RPCV celebration in DC last summer, and he brought a photo of himself and Dell Hood, another roomie from Addis. He also mentioned that the two other RPCVs he keeps in touch with are Jim Binder and Cynthia Tse Kimberlin.

Joe and his wife have lived in Santa Rosa, Cal., for more than three decades. They have two children, and one grandchild.



Hats for summer!

Cotton, khaki-colored baseball hats embroidered in full color with the flags of Ethiopia and Eritrea. 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

Joe refers readers to two websites, one for biographical info and the other for Peace Corps memories: <http://phys-astro.sonoma.edu/people/faculty/tenn/> and <http://www.sonic.net/~tenn/LettersFromEthiopia/> Joe requests that "Letters From Ethiopia" not be broadcast on the web.

Joe's email address: tenn@sonic.net.

Sam Greer speaks out

Sam Greer (Addis 66–68) gave a presentation to Boise State University students in November as part of the school's International Education Week. The four-day program is designed to give BSU students a chance to relate to the experiences of individuals who have spent significant time abroad.

Other notes

Ethiopia/Eritrea 2 reunion in 2004

From **Gloria Curtis** (Asmara 63–65): The group that served together 1963–65 will join the NPCA Conference in Chicago Aug. 6 – 8, 2004. We plan to have our reunion before the Conference begins and you can choose to stay on for all events. More details later. Contact Gloria Gieseke Curtis at don_curtis@msn.com.

New Ethiopia 1 mug book suggested

Tom Williams (Chion 62–63) writes: We need to have a picture book of all Ethi 1 pcvs with old and current pictures. I'd be willing to help financially if some one could organize the task.

NY Times mention

Tom Williams got a mention in the 2/16 Sunday *Times* "Weddings/Celebrations" that featured the wedding of his daughter, Brooke, to Joshua Liberson. In the "Vows" article, Brooke was described as "a willowy beauty who seems to have arrived from a planet inhabited by a species related to humans, but taller and better looking."

Former ambassador to Ethiopia dies

Edward M. Korry, who was ambassador to Ethiopia when the Peace Corps first arrived there, died this past January in Charlotte, N.C.

Peace and war

Dick Lipez (Debre Marcos, Addis 62–64) has the lead article entitled "Peace Corps and the War on Iraq" in the current LGB RPCVs newsletter. Dick ends with: "The Peace Corps will and should push on as best it can. But it is likely to suffer and shrink in the new world created partly by a demented Osama bin Laden and partly by an unknowing and arrogant George W. Bush. The best hope for the Peace Corps and its mission, more splendid than ever, is to outlast the both of them."

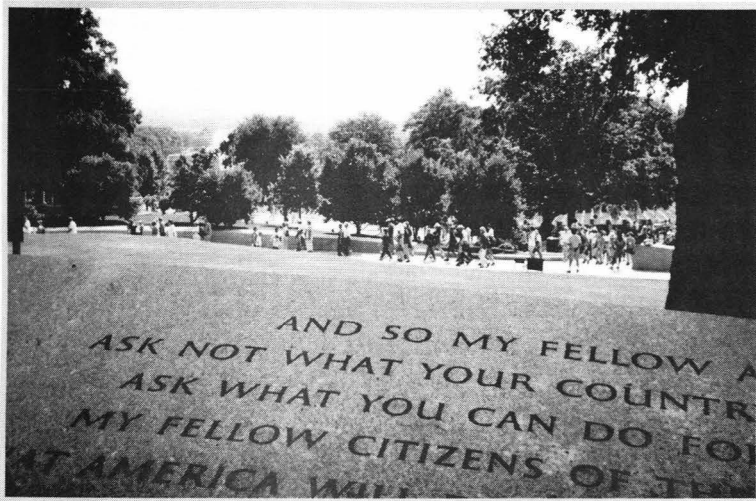
Ed Lynch serves on inquiry panel

Last November, Ed Lynch (Nazareth 63–65), who is the National Coordinator of The Lawyers Alliance for Justice in Ireland — a human rights advocacy group, served as a panel member of a citizen's inquiry into the killing of six unarmed men in Belfast, Ireland in 1973. The panel's conclusion: "the killings [were] completely unjustified and part of a plan by the British Military to terrorize the Irish community into submission in the face of growing rebellion in Belfast, Derry and surrounding communities."

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

- * **Karen Weise** (1970s) sought by PC Trainer TSe-haye Debalkew Tessema.
- * **Ed Burns** (Gondar in 1970–71) sought by Roberta Vann (Gondar in 1970–71)
- * **Nan Wilmeth** (Eritrea 64–) sought by Noel Wolf from Kagnaw Station.



RPCVs walk to the Kennedy grave as part of the Closing Ceremonies



Neal Sobania (Addis 68-72) leads a tour of Ethiopian art at the Smithsonian

More photos from the 40+1
from Mike Brady and Lois Shoemaker



Many Ethi Is celebrated their 40th Anniversary on Thursday evening. Standing back row: Paul Koprowski, Dick Howrigan, Tom Williams, non-1, Carol Miller Reynolds, John Coyne, Russ Scoville, Bill Donohoe, Sue Hoyt Aiken, Sam Fisk, Carleen Glamzi Busse, Mark Himmelstein, Maggie O'Brien Donohoe, John Rude, Cynthia Tse Kimberlin, Rusty Miller Rich, Joe Tenn, Joan Corboy, Andy Wright, Dell Hood, Joanna London, Harris Wofford, Paul Reagan, Sally Collier Caiola, Lois Shoemaker, Peggy Drury, Ty Vignone, Dick Lipetz. Seated middle row: Neil Boyer, Barbara Fontaine, Peter Leofanti, Nyle Kardatzke, Jack Prebis, Ray Capozzi, Adrien Damon Katter, Eldon Katter. Seated front: Marian Haley Beil, Camilla Chickering Moore, Frances Fisher LaCroix, Leo Cecchini.



Ethi Xs at the Embassy Reception: Mike Brady, Neal Sobania, Charles Fischer, Debbie Kendall, ?, Nancy Polich, ?, Ninian Beall, ?, ?, Richard Sherman

Books + Writers

New books by Ethiopia and Eritrea Peace Corps writers

Heart of Forgiveness: A Practical Path to Healing
by Madeline Ko-I Bastis (Harar 62–64)
Red Wheel/Weiser
February, 2003
107 pages
\$12.95

Waking Up in Nashville
by Stephen Foehr (Debark 65–66)
Sanctuary Publisher, Ltd
March, 2003
272 pages
\$18.95

Bruce Crit: The Black Nationalist Writings of John Edward Bruce
by William Seraile (Makele 63–65)
The University of Tennessee Press
January, 2003
280 pages
\$34.00

Tongue Tied
A Donald Strachey Mystery
by Richard Stevenson
aka Richard Lipez (Debre Marcos, Addis 62–64)
New York: St. Martins Press
March 2003
208 pages
\$22.95

Other
Of Beetles & Angels: A Boy's Remarkable Journey from a Refugee Camp to Harvard
(for ages 10 and up)
by Mawi Asgedom
Little Brown & Co.
September 2002
192 pages
\$9.95

William Seraile wrote *The Herald*: Ethiopia provided me with the opportunity to realize that the history of Africans in the diaspora was a worthy subject for study. I am on of the pioneers of the Black Studies faculty in the United States. Except for my Peace Corps experience, I would never have pursued scholarly interest in Africa and African Studies. My Ph.D. is in American History as there was no Black Studies or African American Studies doctoral programs in the early 1970s.

Review

Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia*
by James E. Baum
Grosset & Dunlap Publishers
1935
351 pages

Reviewed by John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62–64)

IN THE WINTER OF 1961 in southern Michigan after I received word from the Peace Corps that they wanted me to teach in Ethiopia, I went to the library of Western Michigan University to find out where in the hell Ethiopia was. What I knew about the Empire could be summed up in one word, Mussolini.

On the college library shelf I pulled down a thick copy of the James E. Baum book *Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia*. (Let me correct my above assertion — I knew two things about Ethiopia; I also knew Ethiopia was once called Abyssinia.) I don't remember if I read any of Baum's book that afternoon. But I do remember the photos.

I was unnerved by those small, grainy black-and-white photos of "Abyssinian Types," villagers with jugs, humped cattle of Gojjam, Ras Hailu's bodyguard, the Simien escarpment. They showed an extremely primitive and remote country. At the time, months before I would leave for Peace Corps training at Georgetown University, I wanted new and recent photographs of Ethiopia: street scenes, buildings, secondary schools and students. I wanted to try and "see" myself there in Abyssinia, the unknown Ethiopia.

I must have slipped the book with the thick, large-font type and orange jacket book back on its shelf and turned elsewhere for newer accounts of the Empire. After all, *Unknown Ethiopia* had been published in 1935, and it was a reprint of *Savage*

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

Abyssinia, first published in 1927. Both editions were published by J.H. Sears & Company years before I was born.

Rediscovery

Only recently, after all these years, did I rediscover that book in a collection of "Ethiopian stuff" my wife had stacked away in the darkest corners of our attic. Actually, I discovered I had two copies of **Unknown Ethiopia**, and I have no recollection of how they came into my possession. I do know I never read the book.

Nevertheless, in that cramped attic, I sat down and read the opening line of the Preface:

"Louis Agassiz Fuertes of Cornell University and I had conceived the idea of an expedition to Abyssinia for the purpose of collecting museum specimens; mammals and birds."

Now in my sixties I have developed a serious, if sentimental, recollection of my time in Ethiopia, and I look back fondly at those years, that mountainous land, and our experience there before the Empire was racked with famine, riots, and the Red and White Terrors that led to the end of the Empire, the creation of Eritrea, and the political ambitions of various ethnic groups who follow their kinsmen first, their nation second.

It is almost possible to overlay news accounts of what has happened in Ethiopia since the Emperor's death onto the description of Baum's travel to Abyssinia in 1927 and make a perfect match. Then — as now — it is a land of Rases, whether or not today's leaders claim that title in the political correctness of our times. It is, also, still a land of rough terrain, rare mammals, and a deep distrust of *faranjoch*.

Baum's book is not about politics — though, as we know, one can hardly escape politics in Ethiopia. Baum and his party of curators simply wanted to extract rare specimens from the remote regions of the Empire and leave the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, in giving his account of the Abyssinia hunt, Baum does provide vivid portraits of the Ethiopian

dynasty in the 1920s — Ras Tafari (Emperor Haile Selassie), as well as several other pretenders to the throne.

The expeditionary team

James E. Baum went to Abyssinia to kill rare animals that would be brought back to America to fill the African dioramas in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. They were looking particularly for two animals: the mountain nyala (*tragelephus buxtongiensis*) in southern Ethiopia, and the Walia Ibex (*capra walia*) in northern Ethiopia's high Simien Mountains.

In the opening chapter of the book, he lists the other American participants and their roles in the expedition:

- Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, who was in command, had been on previous expeditions to South America, Alaska, and Central America. At the time, he was curator of mammals of the Field. He would be the "historian of the expedition."
- Louis Agassiz Fuertes was in charge of the ornithological part.
- Alfred M. Bailey, new to Chicago and from the Denver Natural History Museum, came along at Osgood's suggestion.
- C. Suydam Cutting of New York, who is described by Baum as "a sportsman and at one time court tennis champion, volunteered to make a moving picture record of the journey."

The whole Ethiopian trip was underwritten by the *Chicago Daily News*. (This was not an uncommon practice by newspapers. Stanley's trip in 1871 to find David Livingstone was commissioned by the *New York Herald*.) Baum cabled regular reports to Chicago that were serialized in the paper about what was officially called the "Chicago Daily News-Field Museum Expedition to Abyssinia in 1926-27."

James Edwin Baum

James Edwin Baum, the author, was one of those wonderful characters that the American west always seems to produce. Born in Nebraska, Baum ran away from home at the age of 14. He rode freight

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trains to Wyoming where he worked as a horse wrangler, then went to Princeton University but dropped out to become a reporter in Omaha. Later he became the hunting and fishing columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*. It was during this period that he and Louis Agassiz Fuertes planned the expedition to Abyssinia. After the Ethiopian expedition, Baum would write several other books (*Spears in the Sun*, 1931, and *Adventures of Gilead Skaggs*, 1959) and spent most of his life writing, traveling, and big-game hunting in Africa, Alaska, and Persia.

Louis Agassiz Fuertese

The most famous of the principle figures on this expedition was Louis Agassiz Fuertese, America's most notable ornithological painter since Audubon. In 1930, the Field Museum published an *Album of Abyssinian Birds and Mammals** that he painted while in Ethiopia. The text was written by W.H. Osgood, and the publication was paid for by C. Suydam Cutting.

C. Suydam Cutting

C. Suydam Cutting, a wealthy American naturalist, later became better known as the man responsible for introducing the Lhasa Apso [dog] into the United States. In 1925, in search of wildlife specimens for museums, he traveled to Tibet with Theodore and Kermit Roosevelt, sons of the president, where he was presented with two of the little dogs by the 13th Dalai Lama.

Ethiopian connections

In his Preface, Baum thanks Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie) — then Regent — saying, "without [his help] the expedition could never have traveled ten miles outside the capital." He also thanks Colonel D.A. Sandford who, "to strangers in a strange country, was 'as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'" (Early PCVs in Addis Ababa might remember Sandford and his wife. They were famous in Addis Ababa for having lived most of their lives in the Empire, and being pillars of the Church of

England.) Baum also thanks another Englishman, Charles F. Rey, of London, who had lived in Addis Ababa for four years and was a friend of Ras Tafari, and was back on a visit when the expedition group arrived in country. Baum writes, "Mr. Rey is the only living man who has made a complete study of the Amharic language, Abyssinian history and ethnology."

Babur tabia yet no?

The book opens with a summary of historical Abyssinia, several thousand years summed up in several thousand words, and then moves quickly to their arrival in Addis Ababa. All of these adventure books and travel journals of Ethiopia from the days before any of us landed there by plane in 1962, open with the trip by train up from Dire Dawa and the arrival in Addis Ababa. It had taken the Baum party a month of continuous travel to reach the Empire. Arriving at the *babur tabia*, Baum writes, ". . . we pulled into the station at Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia; barbaric feudal kingdom of African highlanders."

And so it would begin.

Baum and his party spent seven months in Ethiopia, traveled some two thousand miles by mule and camel caravan, and collected over thirty-eight hundred specimens of birds and small mammals.

While the whole journey was taken under the protection of Ras Tafari, and they were in possession of letters from local chiefs, they were also subject to hostile customs officials, and were continually on the watch for *shiftas*.

Nevertheless, in the seven months, they were never attacked, nor in any actual danger from Ethiopians beyond the precarious situations that they put themselves in while going after game. The hardship the party suffered was the terrain, from the lowlands of the Wabbi Shebeli to the cliffs of the Simien highlands.

Into the provinces

Baum is at his best in describing the landscape and the hunts. Here is his description of Tichu forest in Arrusi province:

* A copy of this book was found at Alibris.com for \$464.

Khartoum

Galabat
Gojjam
Simien Mts.
Lake Tana
Addis Ababa

"Never, anywhere, had we seen such trees — except in paintings. Giant cedars, perhaps a thousand years old, straight as lances reared heads a hundred feet, some with gnarly trunks twisted grotesquely, and all of immense size, thirty or forty feet around the base; hoary and moss-hung. Wild olive, low but spreading to great width were scattered here and there through the forest. Strange, blossoming trees grew thickly in the ravines, making those deeper parts almost jungle-like. And between the larger trees the ground was carpeted with thick grass, knee high."

Later in the book, and their journey, he is in the heights of Simien with a collection of fearless Simien scouts, particularly a man name Tichanu. Of him, Baum writes: "He was tireless and the most fearless man I've ever seen on the ragged edge of sheer space."

The men would kill a dozen Walia ibex in seven days' hunting in the peaks, often at heights of thirteen and fourteen thousand feet. None of the collecting would have been possible without the Simien scouts. They were, "the finest hunters we had met in Abyssinia, or anywhere in the world, for that matter; keen of eye, absolutely fearless upon the ledges — and tireless."

The final chapter — an addition to the original edition — is a quick summary of the political chess game being played out in the Horn and is written while the future of the Empire, and the world as a whole, is still being decided by European powers. Hitler and Mussolini are poised to seize land, anyone's land, and Baum expresses an interest in the outcome, but no need to intervene, which was the political and public sentiment of America at the time.

Baum reminds readers of the coronation of Haile Selassie, "You read, no doubt, of this magnificent barbaric spectacle in every newspaper and maga-

zine of the time." But unlike readers who might have seen it as "an affair of sound and fury signifying nothing" Baum called it "an extremely clever diplomatic move on the part of Haile Selassie." By prevailing upon the great Powers to send an "exalted personage" to his coronation, the colonizing Powers "were obligated just a little more than before in their promises to preserve the freedom of this particular small nation."

While having been impressed by Haile Selassie when he was Regent and as Emperor, Baum is not optimistic that Ethiopia will survive any invasion.

"The character of the Abyssinian warriors however is against this. Their undoubted individual dash and courage, a deplorable and misplaced confidence in the crude weapons they have always used, their ignorance of modern warfare and of machine-guns, airplanes, gas and tanks, added to the proud memory of Menelik's victory over the Italians in 1896, I fear will be their undoing In that case, of course, Italy will soon possess a new colony and Abyssinia, Ethiopia, the ancient stronghold of Balkis, Queen of Sheba, will be no more."

In the short run, Baum was right. Ethiopia did fall to Italy. But in the long view of the country, he was wrong, as most Westerners have been proven to be about Ethiopia, whether hunting *tragelephus buxtgoniensis* or *capra walia* or not.

Note: The Field Museum on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago still has extensive holdings on all aspects of that Abyssinian expedition, from the zoological and ethnographic specimens collected, to archival records, field notes, newspaper clippings, photographs, the C.S. Cutting film of the expedition, and the 113 original pencil and watercolor zoological field studies by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. If your interest merits, you are welcome to visit the Library and examine some or all of this fascinating material. Contact: Benjamin W. Williams, Head Librarian of the Field Museum.

John Coyne is the editor of PeaceCorpsWriters.org and co-founder of the new Third Goal Initiative, the Peace Corps Fund.

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THE HERALD

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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.

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On the web and of interest

www.ethioamericans.com

Citizens League of Ethiopian-Americans

bettyladuke.com

Artist Betty LaDuke has spent time in Eritrea beginning in 1994 and has produced many works featuring the people of Eritrea, especially women.

New in the E&E RPCVs Library

Gifts from Fran Williams Davidson (Addis, Debre Marcos 65-67):

Abyssinian Adventure, by Geoffrey Harmsworth, 300 pages, illustrated, Gainsborough Press, London, 1935.

Ethiopia: Its Culture and Its Birds by Dean Hobbs Blanchard, 313 pages, illustrated, Naylor Company of San Antonio, TX, 1969

Eyewitness in Abyssinia by Herbert Matthews, 320 pages, illustrated, published by Martin Secker & Warburg, London, 1937

Sheba: Through the Desert in Search of the Legendary Queen by Nicholas Clapp, 372 pages, illustrated, Mariner Books, New York, 2001 (signed by author).

Unknown Ethiopia: New Light on Darkest Abyssinia by James E. Baum, 354 pages, illustrated, Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1935. (Reviewed by John Coyne on page 46.)

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