

The Ethiopia HERALD

February, 1991

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

Peace Corps' 30th Anniversary Conference and Celebration will be in Washington, DC August 1 - 4, 1991

National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers expects 7,000 RPCVs

The National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. The event will take place on the Mall near the Capital in Washington, DC from August 1 through 4, 1991.

For those who attended the 25th, this one will be just as inspiring, fun, moving, informative... Events will include a Congressional reception; general sessions with nationally known speakers; sessions on volunteerism; a job fair; dealers selling books by RPCV writers; T-shirts to suit your every peace need, and much, much more; time for country-of-service groups to gather; an international fair with music, dance and food; and a commemorative walk and peace service at the Lincoln Memorial.

There will be two new events at this Conference. The first will be Volunteer Day — on the first day of the conference attendees will reaffirm their commitment to serve by working as volunteers in the Washington area. Volunteer Day is designed to be a model for similar events around the country and will demonstrate the unified spirit of Returned Volunteers and their support of volunteerism in every community.

The second new event will be a "Living Map." RPCVs, their families and friends will gather to form a map of the world. This project has grown out of a geography literacy program conducted by the West Cascade RPCVs of Eugene, Oregon. It will be fun, educational and will offer an opportunity to demonstrate to the country what RPCVs have learned — that the world is a single community.

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs has begun to make arrangements for special events for returned Volunteers, their families and their friends — both from the US and from Ethiopia and Eritrea. These will include an up-date on recent events in country; social gatherings and block housing at reduced rates. It is expected that there will be both room blocks in a hotel, as well as space in a Washington college dormitory for even lower rates.

For information/reservations please contact:

Nancy Stitch Stern
(Ghlon, Addis Ababa 66-68)
10505 Acacia Lane
Fairfax, VA 22032
☎ 703/250-9394

The 1990 Eugene RPCV Conference: "Peace as Policy"

An Ethiopia/Eritrea group is formed

*John Rude, Salem, Oregon
Tessenel/Adl Ugri, 62-64*

If ever there was a time and place to form a new group concerned with the turbulence and tragedy of the Horn of Africa, July 20 to 22, 1990 was the time, and the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Conference in Eugene, Oregon was the place. The weather was sweltering, but memories and new friendships blossomed under the shade trees alongside the Willamette River. David and Courtney Arnold, 64-66, were among the official hosts as members of the West Cascade RPCVs—a small, regional group which managed to attract 1,200 RPCVs and their families from around the world and across the decades to a quiet university town in the middle of nowhere.

Approximately 30 of those who attended the Conference were Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs, and their families. They assembled for a meal of injera and wat—or tita and zigini technically, since it was prepared by Abraham Gebregiorgis and three other members of Portland, Oregon's Eritrean Relief Committee. Among the

Continued on page 4.

Ploughshares seeks volunteers for Ethiopia project

Last October Ploughshares and the Soviet Peace Fund sent 8 volunteers (4 Americans, 4 Soviets) to work on an ambitious and unique agriculture/aquaculture project to reclaim twenty-nine acres of depleted land in the village of Godina, Showa Province (14 km from Debre Zeit).

This US/Soviet Partners Project team was joined by members of the non-government Ethiopian Family Service Organization in working to improve the diet of farmers in the region, and to leave a surplus and a marketable cash crop.

This first team completed its three-month program in early January and was replaced by a second team which is currently in Ethiopia. A third team will depart in April to continue the work of the project.

Ploughshares is a Seattle based volunteer organization founded in 1984 by RPCVs to work on grassroots projects with Soviet citizens to promote peace and understanding.

Ploughshares, the Soviet Peace Fund, the Family Service Organization and the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have joined together to recruit, train, transport, and support the U.S., Soviet, and Ethiopian volunteers. These groups are currently seeking volunteers to go to Ethiopia with the April team.

Volunteers going to Ethiopia on this unique project are being asked to contribute or help to raise \$3,500 to cover the cost of their expenses. Previous agriculture or fisheries experience is not necessary.

For more information please call Melissa Pallthorp at either 206/786-7118 (work) or 206/352-2809 (evenings), or write:

PLOUGHSHARES
509 10th Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102

Statement of Purpose

Ethiopia/Eritrea Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

John Rude, Salem, Oregon
Tessenet/Adi Ugrl, 62-64

The discussions at the Eugene conference of RPCVs were of the "round-robin" variety: no one took notes, groups dissolved and re-formed, and eventually someone (me) volunteered to take a stab at a statement of purpose. Here is what I remember of these discussions:

- 1 Our organization should not duplicate (or compete with) the existing "Friends of Ethiopia." The latter organization produces a newsletter which is educational in purpose, and eschews any connection with the National Council of RPCVs or the Peace Corps.
- 2 The benefits to members of Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs should be:
 - Maintaining connections with RPCVs in our own years of service, or establishing new connections with RPCVs based on common ties to the culture, geography and people of Ethiopia and Eritrea.
 - Sharing experiences, recollections and insights from these formative years of our lives.
 - Receiving (or contributing) news about events and trends in Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as information about the activities and viewpoints of the "Diaspora" (i.e. "Habesha" living in Europe or North and South America).
 - Developing or assisting projects that contribute directly to constructive resolution of problems in the region. (See article on Ploughshares Project on this page.)
 - Providing resources (bibliographies, speakers, articles, photos, slides) which will help RPCVs interpret for the American public the background and context of events in Ethiopia and Eritrea (e.g. famines, armed conflicts, ethnic and linguistic challenges, etc.).
- 3 We will maintain an interim organization (see box for members of the initial steering committee) until elections of officers are held at the Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Peace Corps to be held in Washington, DC next August.
- 4 Establishment and continuation of the Affiliate status with the National Council of RPCVs depends entirely on YOUR RESPONSE. In the absence of dues-paying members and committed officers, we will cease publishing this newsletter after July, 1991.

I sincerely hope that this accurately represents the "collective wisdom" of our Eugene discussions. I also hope that all who read this will support this new organization, and find a way to contribute.

- ➡ Sam Greer, 66-68, has provided the group with a draft of By-laws and Incorporation Papers. They will be available at the conference for your review.

The Ethiopia Herald: edited, produced - Marian Haley Bell; contributing editors - John Rude, John Coyne, Fran Fisher LaCroix; distribution - Dennis Ekberg (all 62-64).

Two more editions of The Ethiopia Herald will be published before the 30th. We will be listing those who are planning to attend, so write Nancy Stern to have your name added to the list. Watch for the names of your friends — let them be an inspiration to you!

Dear Fellow Ethiopia Returned Peace Corps Volunteer,

It was rejuvenating to attend the National Conference of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in Eugene, Oregon in July, 1990. It was billed as "a gathering of America's former Peace Corps Volunteers to celebrate a Third World experience and to identify a responsible course of social and political action on critical cultural and biological conflicts that threaten the communities where we lived and worked." We did both celebrate and identify responsible courses of action!

In the final hour of the conference I was "ram-rodged" in as chair of the steering committee for Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs, and in that role I write to urge you attend the Peace Corps' 30th Anniversary Conference and Celebration in Washington. Mark your calendar and save your American birr!! It should be an "awesome event," to use our teens' parlance.

My second purpose in writing is to encourage you to join the Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs which is affiliated with the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. At the Eugene Conference, I saw that the clout, voice and power is with those

who are bonded to the National Council. We need to have both representation and vote. Many of our cohorts have put in both time and talent to represent us: David and Courtney Arnold, Marian Haley Bell, John Coyne, Jack Preblis. We need to get organized, be active and continue bearing the torch.

The National Council of RPCVs was founded in 1979 to unite the Peace Corps alumni community in order to continue the commitment we made when we first joined the Peace Corps. Three immediate, short-term objectives of the National Council are:

- To work with Peace Corps to identify and locate former Volunteers and staff.
- To act as coordinator for 97 existing groups and support the formation of new groups.
- To help RPCVs share their knowledge and understanding of other people, cultures, economies and governments.

Currently, the National Council:

- Is working to aid RPCVs in fulfilling the Third Goal of the Peace Corps

— to bring the world back home
— by administering grants to groups, and offering workshops, guides and other support for those planning speakers bureaus and other types of presentations.

- Publishes WorldView magazine.
- Sponsors an annual conference.
- Sponsors special events such as the Journals of Peace readings in the U. S. Capitol in 1989.
- Keeps a watchful eye on government policy concerning critical issues of interest to RPCVs, and testifies before Congress on such topics as the Peace Corps budget.

Dues for joint membership are \$35. This is a small fee compared to some we currently pay for professional membership. You need to join for your self; to revitalize the "significant emotional event" of Peace Corps.

Please let us hear from you.

Tenystillini

Fran Fisher LaCroix
Richland WA
Debre Berhan 62-64

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs membership

Name _____

Address _____

City, state, zip, country _____

Name when in the Peace Corps if different from above _____

Home phone _____

Work phone _____

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

Group # and type of project _____

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

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

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

Make your check payable to:
Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs

I would like work on _____

for Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs.

Please send to:

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

What's in a name?

The question of Eritrea's status (province? ...secessionist movement? ...incipient independent state?) has been the central issue aggravating both Eritrea and Ethiopia since the first Peace Corps volunteers arrived in 1962 (not to mention the previous two decades). Current events seem to be setting the stage for a self-governing Eritrea—but who can say what the final outcome will be? Lacking a crystal ball (or any clear consensus among RPCVs about whether Eritrea *should* be independent) we have decided to embrace both regions and cultures in the name of our organization. We know this is an arbitrary choice; one war-weary RPCV suggested that we could have chosen a longer title, such as "Ethiopia-Eritrea-Wollo-Tigre-Ogaden-and/or-Maybe-Someday-Somalia RPCVs." The spirit which lies behind our slashed name reflects a desire to get beyond the 30-year Eritrean conflict (and other divisions) and contribute to international efforts to help *all* people in the area to develop stable, self-reliant societies. If the name offends you, please keep this basic intent in mind—or suggest an alternative.

We have the names and addresses of 1,600 of the more than 3,000 PCVs who served in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Please send us info on those with whom you have contact, and your training and reunion directories so that we can make contact with all.

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs

National Council of RPCVs
2119 S Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008-4011

Address correction requested

The next issue will have more news — less business. Send info you'd like to share with your Peace Corps friends — including clippings you see about Ethiopia or the Peace Corps to:

Marian Haley Bell (fax 716-461-0644)
330 Brooklawn Drive
Rochester, NY 14618-2925

1990 Eugene RPCV Conference

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Ethiopian guests were Samuel Tadessa, a former Peace Corps/Ethiopia staff member, 63-68, now married to RPCV Sarah Samuel, 66-68, and Tsegay Abebe, daughter of legendary marathoner Abebe Bikile.

John Coyne narrated a slide-show prepared by Jack Prebbs, 62-64, following a visit Jack and Dick Lipez, 62-64, made to Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1988.

Discussions at this meeting led to the formation of **Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs** and Frances Fisher LaCroix, 62-64, agreed to chair a Steering Committee to help form the organization and set its course. (See "Statement of Purpose" on page 2 for more details and elsewhere on this page for the Steering Committee.)

By all accounts the conference was a smashing success—a prelude to the gathering of 7,000 RPCVs in Washington, DC in 1991 for the 30 Anniversary of the Peace Corps.

Ethiopian artifacts are on display in Eugene

A exhibition entitled "Ethiopia's Braided Traditions" can be seen in Eugene, Oregon at the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural History through July 28, 1991. The exhibit examines the influence of Islamic, Orthodox Christian, and Jewish religious and cultural traditions in Ethiopia, as well as the country's history from pre-historic times to the present. It features religious and everyday objects and photographs.

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs Steering Committee

Fran Fisher LaCroix, 62-64, chair
202 West Orchard Way
Richland WA 99352
C. J. Castagnaro, 64-66, 67-69
Jim Friberg, 62-64
Tom Gallagher, 62-64
Sheila Nesse, 65-67
Betty Zakarian, 62-64

If you would like to work with this committee, please contact Fran. Let us have representation from as many groups as possible.

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