

The Ethiopia HERALD

May, 1991 Number 2

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

Making plans for the Peace Corps 30th Anniversary Conference, Washington, DC August 1-4

Materials about the conference will be sent out in early May by the National Council to all those who are on their mailing list. If you don't receive them by late May, contact the National Council (see address on the return address of this newsletter or call 202/462-5938).

The mailing will include details of the activities that will take place at the conference, a registration form, and travel and lodging information.

What you need to do

✓ Fill out the registration form and send it in with the registration fee to the National Council. There is a discounted rate for early registration. (Those who do not belong to the National Council will pay the non-member rate and will then automatically become a member of the National Council and one affiliated group. Please choose Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs for your affiliated group membership - this will help our group grow and thrive.)

✓ Send the "Hotel Registration Form" to WORLDTEK Travel. Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs has selected the

Holiday Inn Capitol
550 C Street SW

as its headquarters. The cost is \$77.00 for rooms with one to four guests and it is very conveniently located close to the Mall and the Smithsonian.

In addition to the events planned by the National Council, Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs have plans in the works for a Friday night cocktail party with a cash bar; a country update on Saturday afternoon with speakers plus the first annual general meeting of the group to determine the course of the organization; and a Saturday night meal at an Ethiopian restaurant which will be paid for individually.

✓ **You must make your own reservations directly with the restaurant.** E/E RPCVs has made arrangements with three Ethiopian restaurants* (all in the same block) which will begin NOW to take reservations for dinner Saturday evening, August 3rd. They are:

Fasika ☎ 202-797-7673
2447 18th St. NW, Wash DC 20009

Meskerem ☎ 202-462-4100
2434 18th St. NW, Wash DC 20009

Red Sea ☎ 202-483-5000
2463 18th St. NW, Wash DC 20009

Because of the large turnout expected, we felt that this was the only way to ensure that every one would have an opportunity to enjoy an Ingera and wat feast. Call your friends, make some plans to get together to visit — 18th Street will be the place to be for Ethi RPCVs. (The restaurants will request that you reconfirm your reservation 2 weeks prior to the dinner.)

✓ **Please notify us** if you will be attending any of the Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCV activities so that we can plan accordingly. Write or call:

Nanci Stich Stern ☎ 703-250-9394
10505 Acacia Lane
Fairfax, VA 22032

Each RPCV attendee will be asked to pay \$3.00 to help defray expenses for the planning and arrangements for these activities.

This will be a very exciting event —
DON'T MISS IT!

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Taking care of business

This is the last issue of The Ethiopia Herald that will be sent to the full mailing list of 1,428 on our database. The first issue cost \$460 to reproduce and mail. (All other production was done gratis.) Plans are to publish a longer version of the newsletter to the membership. • Already 61 have joined the organization. • Your mailing label shows the date your membership started. • If you did not receive the 2/91 issue of the Ethiopia Herald and would like one, write to Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs at the address on the membership form.

* Thanks to the folks at Fasika, Meskerem and the Red Sea for allowing us to make these special arrangements.

F R I E N D S

News from the Horn

Keith Bravinder (62-64) died last summer.

Writings by **Kathleen Coskran** (65-67) and **Marla Thomas** (71-72) are included in the collection of works by RPCVs entitled "From the Center of the Earth: Stories Out of the Peace Corps." The anthology is published by Clover Park Press (P. O. Box 5067, Santa Monica CA 90409-5067). Ms. Coskran will also be one of six RPCV writers to be featured on National Public Radio in conjunction with the 30th Anniversary Conference.

John Coyne (Addis Ababa 62-64), a novelist living in New York, and editor of the RPCV WRITERS newsletter, will lead a panel discussion by Volunteers who have published books on their experience at the 30th Anniversary Conference. In the pages of RPCV WRITERS, Coyne is forging a campaign to see that the next director of the Peace Corps is a former Volunteer.

Karen DeWitt (Ghion 66-68) was profiled in a recent article about the Peace Corps in the Phillip Morris Magazine (Spring 1991). Detailed was an incident in Karen's tour when she was travelling by bus from Addis Ababa to Ghion and had a *teflk sew* arrested for trying to take the seat of a *shamagle*. Her students cheered her

"as a paragon of democracy" for having the lawyer thrown in jail.

Karen is the national education correspondent for the Washington bureau of The New York Times.

John Garamendi (66-68) a former state senator in California, and the first elected insurance commissioner of California, has been invited to speak at the 30th Anniversary Conference.

Charles E. Hill (66-68) died of multiple myeloma Dec. 16, 1990 at his Washington home. He was an authority on government programs to assist the poor in paying their home heating bills and had been head of the National Consumer Law Center.

Sharon Lynne Mullan (74-76) died at her home in McLean VA on Dec. 17.

Paul Tsongas (62-64), former one-term U. S. Senator, who recently announced his candidacy for president in 1992, will be one of the featured speakers at the 30th Anniversary Conference.

Harris Wofford (Country Director 62-64) is being mentioned as a possible interim senator from Pennsylvania to complete the term of John Heinz. Harris is currently PA's Secretary of Labor & Industry.

3.22.91 The Ethiopian army lost regions of Gojjam and Gondar in late February and early March. Some troops are being pulled out of Eritrea to counter these losses. March 10th the EPLF seized Edd 160km north of Assab.

4.5.91 Rebel forces were reported to be 90 miles from Addis Ababa and threatening the city on three sides. Non-essential embassy staff and dependents from the US, Canada and European countries were advised by their embassies to leave the country. Gasoline and domestic fuel are rationed and food prices have soared. There is severe drought in the north and another major famine looms. The Soviet Union will not renew its 10-year-\$11 billion arms agreement which expired in December.

4.9.91 Eritrean rebels say they have seized two ports on the Red Sea (Beylul and Beraisole), one just 30 miles from Assab, which is still controlled by Ethiopia. (The EPLF has controlled Massawa since February 1990.)

4.11.91 The Ethiopian state radio reported: "Students of senior secondary schools today started to register for deployment to the war front."

4.11.91 There are an estimated 1.2 million refugees in Ethiopia - the result of fighting there as well as in the Sudan and Somalia. In the Ogaden there are 600,000 in refugee camps where conditions are appalling and food is in short supply.

4.26.91 Tigre rebels claimed to have captured a town 65 miles west of Addis Ababa. All US embassy dependents and non-essential personnel are ordered out by the US State Dept. which also urged the 600 Americans in the country to leave.

4.26.91 In defiance toward advancing rebels, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, dropped his VP, Fissehayle Desta, who is of the same ethnic group as one of the rebel groups, and promoted Foreign Minister Tesfaye Dinka to prime minister.

FYI

Bread for the World ("a nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decision makers") is campaigning for the enactment of H.R. 1454, the "Horn of Africa Recovery and Food Security Act of 1991" sponsored by Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Alan Wheat (D-MO). The bill seeks to assure people in the Horn of Africa the right to food and to promote peace and development through grassroots participation. For more information write: Bread for the

World, 802 Rhode Island Ave., NE, Washington DC 20018.

E/E RPCVs does not endorse any charitable organization but will inform its membership of possible relevant efforts.

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Humorous stories about life in the Peace Corps are being sought for an anthology to be published for the 30th. For guidelines contact: The Good Humor Project West Cascade RPCVs, PO Box 5462, Eugene, OR 97405 ☎ 503-345-3504.

Who you'll see at the 30th —

F r o m o u r m a i l

The following RPCVs have begun to make plans to attend the 30th. Won't you join us?

Jane Campbell Beaven staff 64-66
Kathy Beckman 66-68
Marlan Hely Bell 62-64
John Coyne 62-64
Virginia Veiser Delorme 64-66
Sidney Feldman 66-67
Natalie Garrett 64-66
Betty & Bill Graff 63-65 — "and many of their Ethii friends"
Dave Gurr 62-64
Jane Hazlett 72-74
Adrienne & Eldon Katter 62-64
Frances Fisher LaCroix 62-64
Robert & Susie Mayer staff
Jack Prebls 62-64
Irene Rasmussen 68-70
Herb RESnick 62-64
John Rex 62-64
Jackie & John Schlenger 66-68
Louise & Warren Siegal 66-68
Nanci Stich Stern 66-68
James Thompson staff
Roger & Susan Wehrell 68-70
Claire & Harris Wofford staff 62-64

Suggestions for E/E RPCVs activities —

Public awareness or lobbying effort for a more favorable US policy to Ethiopia/Eritrea; short term assistance programs staffed by RPCVs. Sort of a home grown Habitat for Humanity to facilitate RPCVs to give a month or two to positive work without severing employment or residential ties in the US. Teachers take sabbaticals to other lands, why not a brief return to the land of positive experiences?

—Ed Lynch 63-65

Contacts with Ethiopians, either in Ethiopia or elsewhere; work on conservation projects in Ethiopia, supporting US efforts in this field (e.g. NY/San Diego Zoo joint project in the Bale Mountains).

—Dell Hook 62-64

RPCVs visiting Ethiopia in 1992/93

—Richard Sherman 68-70

Do you think the organization could get behind a fund-raiser like the one

the Eritrean Relief Committee sponsored in New York City in November?

—Mary McGuaran Berhan 68-70

What's in the name?

I think you have a great idea using "Eritrea" in your organization name.

—Mary McGuaran Berhan 68-70

I was very alarmed upon receipt of your recent newsletter to see the name being used for this organization. It strikes me that you have broken the cardinal rule of Peace Corps service — the it be non-political.

—Gerry Jones 67-71

Why not extend this to be "Horn of Africa RPCVs" with the secondary objective of avoiding boundary questions?

—Len Orzech 62-64

Join the organization, come to the 30th and come to the Saturday First Annual General Meeting to share your opinions with the Steering Committee that will set the direction for E/E RPCVs. Ed.

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 you check payable to :
Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs

I would like work on

for Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs.

Please send to:

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs
c/o Marlan Haley Bell
330 Brookdown Drive
Rochester, NY 14618

THIRTY SOMETHING — bringing you up to speed on the Peace Corps

Paul D. Coverdell, a former insurance salesman and state senator from Georgia, is the tenth Director of the Peace Corps, and is in his third year at the agency that currently has nearly six thousand Volunteers in seventy-three countries.

In his three years, Coverdell has come under attack a number of times over his leadership of the Peace Corps.

He first drew fire when he changed the name of the agency from Peace Corps to "The United States Peace Corps. This idea irked Senator Alan Cranston as well as RPCVs. Cranston called the name changing "misguided and ill-conceived." Coverdell, who says the words "United States" have been used with the agency since its founding, produced a copy of a 1962 appointing certificate signed by Sargent Shriver that referred to the "United States of America Peace Corps," as proof of his position. He recently changed his mind about the name and now calls the agency the "Peace Corps of the United States."

A front page, January 2, Washington Post story entitled "Traditionalists Upset at the Peace Corps" by Al Kamen, a former Volunteer, brought more bad news to K Street.

Kamen, using the Freedom of Information Act, broke the story that in

Coverdell's first 18 months as director, he visited Atlanta, his hometown, 19 times and stopped in other Georgia cities eight times on trips that were completely or partially paid for by the Peace Corps. Some of these trips involved political appearances. Coverdell has dismissed these allegations. It has been rumored that Coverdell will soon resign to run for the Senate from Georgia.

Meanwhile, while on the job, Coverdell is trying to get his two pet programs — World Wise Schools (a global awareness program which links PCVs with elementary and secondary schools in this country) and Fellows/USA (a program which provides opportunities for returning Volunteers to receive scholarships to pursue master's degrees if they teach in inner-city and rural schools or work in other difficult situations) written into the original Peace Corps Act. This attempt has received a cool reception in Congress.

Coverdell is also using as his slogan "this is not your father's Peace Corps." This phrase rankles many former Volunteers who fear he's trying to change the Peace Corps.

Coverdell has been accused of transforming the agency into an administration foreign policy tool by promoting rapid expansion of pro-

grams into Eastern Europe. The Peace Corps' own Inspector General, Gerard Roy, in his semiannual report last September, said such requests for Volunteers "is outstripping the agency's resources....As Peace Corps expanded into new major programs in Eastern Europe, some of the existing Peace Corps programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America underwent actual budget cuts while others received increases that nevertheless failed to keep pace with local inflation."

John Coyne (62-64), editor of RPCV WRITERS, is currently leading a campaign to have the next director selected from the ranks of former Volunteers. According to Coyne, as reported in a Detroit Free Press Article, "Coverdell's problem is insensitivity to what the job is because he hasn't had the experience."

To Coyne's call for a director who has been a Volunteer, Coverdell responded, "I think it's an important place, but there are many other key factors."

The Ethiopia Herald: editing, production — Marian Haley Bell(62-64); contributing, John Coyne(62-64), Nanci Stich Stern(66-68); distribution, Dennis Ekberg (62-64).

Ethiopia/Eritrea RPCVs

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