



Friends of Lesotho

Edited by: Robert Kerr and Caroline Richardson
2801 Spencer Road, Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815 (301) 589-4236

August 1990

Come to Washington to Celebrate Peace Corps' 30th

Next August 1-4 the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Annual Conference will also celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Peace Corps. Four years ago, over 4,000 former volunteers converged on Washington for the 25th, and next year we hope to more than double registrants to 10,000.

Friendships were renewed, "Friends Of" groups, including ours, were created, and the National Council embarked on a program to increase in status as an umbrella organization of all former volunteers - now more than 130,000.

Corazon Aquino arrived by helicopter as the keynote speaker, the Sargent Shriver and Loret Ruppe awards were established, a memorial service was held for volunteers who had died in service, and a Rose Garden Ceremony for original volunteers are but a few of the highlights.

Next year, all involved want to make the 30th conference even

bigger and better.

In order to make the conference an overwhelming success, the friends of and regional groups are being asked to rally their memberships and actively participate. The goal is to inspire as much of the former volunteer community as possible into viewing the conference as

a major personal, family, social, and educational event. There will be something for everyone - multicultural awareness for children, a seminar on "life as the spouse of a former volunteer," exhibits, a career tent, an international festival, symposiums, and more. One big conference feature will be "Volunteer Day," with participants

rolling up their sleeves and working with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity restoring a rundown home and Barbara Bush's campaign to end illiteracy: the intent is to have former President Carter and Mrs. Bush participate themselves.

Three things are needed from all FOL members right now. The first, seriously consider making

(see *Peace Corps' 30th* page 2)

King Moshoeshoe II Deposed

On or about November 5, 1990, King Moshoeshoe II was deposed and on November 12 his son, Crown Prince Mohato ascended to the throne as King David Mohato Letsie III. Details of what transpired are sketchy, but apparently the King and General Lehanya could not agree on a formula whereby the King could return to Lesotho - General Lehanya required certain restrictions on political activity which the King would not accept. The next newsletter will contain details.

Contents	
Peace Corps' 30th.....	1
King is Deposed	1
Reflections of the Peace Corps-ten years later.....	1
Politics of Division.....	3
Peace Corp Partnership Program	5
Bits & Pieces	5
Lesotho's Music.....	6
FOL Now Tax-Exempt.....	6

Reflections of Peace Corps - 10 years later

Many mornings the noisy and excited talking, running, and poking call me from my desk to the window of my seventh grade American history classroom. Two floors below, several hundred sixth, seventh, and eighth graders anxiously wait on the basketball courts for the school doors to open.

It's been almost ten years since I began to think of interrupting my fourteen-tear-teaching-career for a change of pace. Since I had been a high school

(see *10 years later... page 2*)

Peace Corps' 30th

Washington a summer holiday trip for you and your family. Second, actively encourage your former volunteer friends to come too. With this newsletter you received 5 conference cards. As you send out your holiday greetings and as you meet former volunteers in your daily routines, share these cards and include your name and phone number.

Lastly, develop ideas for ways that Friends of Lesotho can be involved. Along these lines, the FOL Steering Committee is actively recruiting a Friends of Lesotho

Conference Coordinator to liaise with the embassy and to develop ideas for exhibits and seminars FOL can sponsor. If you have ideas in this regard, call or write Scott.

In closing, the number of former volunteers from Lesotho is now well over 1,000. Wouldn't it be great if we could have, say, 400 all together at one time.—Robert Kerr, RPCV, Lesotho, 1981-1983; National Council 30th Anniversary Committee Chair

You all come out now!!

Peace Corps Gifts in Kind Program

To assist volunteers in a variety of countries with their projects, the Gifts in Kind Program searches for donations of materials and services. All contributions are in response to in-country requests from volunteers, host communities and staff offices. In almost all countries there is an urgent need for such items as: microscopes, portable typewriters, calculators, textbooks, sewing machines, baby scales, agricultural equipment, hand and battery operated tools, and sports equipment. Contributions have also

included donations of shipping services, magazine or journal subscriptions, and emergency air travel. The Friends of Lesotho intends to establish a working relationship with this program. In the meantime, if you have specific items you would like to donate to this general effort (even a single calculator), you may contact William Osteen at the Peace Corps Office in Washington on a toll free number: 1-800-424-8580. He will work with you to make shipping arrangements.

—Tom Carroll,
RPCV/Lesotho 1964-66

10 years later...

senior in the early sixties, the thought of being a Peace Corps Volunteer had been a distant desire.

How different the sight below was from the morning assemblies at the ten LEC, Catholic, Anglican and government schools where I went to supervise my NTTC student teachers. Replacing the reds, many shades of blue and green, blacks, and the now popular florescent yellows, oranges, and pinks, my mind recalls the duller and repeated colors on students lined up for morning assemblies and prayer in the Maloti Mountains.

Outside my window I see scattered among these mostly white kids many more black and oriental students than ten years ago as our small cosmopolitan city of 11,000, the world headquarters of both Corning, Inc. and Dresser Rand, Inc. (yeah Alan!!!), continues to prosper, and our national legislation encourages the inclu-

sion of minorities and refugees from around the world.

The visual variety seems to be a metaphor of the many choices available to the kids below me both in future careers and appropriate preparations — groupings of students of low, average, and high ability; gifted and talented programs; alternative education for potential dropouts; foreign languages; instruction on over 100 computers; resource rooms; counseling services; well-attended parent conferences; multi-thousand book library; self-contained classrooms; educational programs for the mentally retarded; full facilities for handicapped students; a school nurse/teacher; a speech pathologist; psychologists; noon-time interest activities; band; chorus; orchestra; ski club; etc...! How unlike the opportunities available to Mpho, Bobo Tebello and the others.

(Concluded on Page 6)



THE POLITICS OF DIVISION

Apartheid: a literal translation of the Afrikaans word means quite simply, "separateness." A foreigner, upon entering any dusty cafe on the veld or city Kroeg of polished wood and brass, can find him/herself audience to a tight-lipped clarification of foreign misunderstanding of the term and political system.

"You Americans, you don't know Afrikaans," explained a gently smiling white South African from Boxburg, his eyes steely, unblinking. "You think the word is 'apart-hate' but our system isn't about hate, it is about separate development." Punctuating this declaration with a shot of 'green mamba' the gentleman's eyes narrowed further when his point was questioned. I asked, "Who are you to determine the potential of an entire race? And how convenient that you find it wholly subservient to your own." To this he replied, "You don't know our blacks, they're different from American blacks."

When we can't be made to understand we are told that we are simply incapable of understanding: "You don't know." Well then, teach me. That was my attitude throughout my two years teaching in Lesotho, Southern Africa. While there were some nuances of the intricate class structure in South Africa that I deciphered only after living within its boundaries, looking back, I think I understood only too well.

Separateness is certainly the cornerstone of the Apartheid system, but that awareness of difference does not exist solely between Black and White race groups. As in any conflict, parties that differ in theory or practice can quickly join forces in the face of a common enemy. In South Africa this is true on both sides of the color bar. White settlers banded together to 'conquer' the southern tip of the 'Dark Continent;' once done, the decisive blow dividing Englishman from Boer or Afrikaaner was delivered in the Boer War.

Similarly, Black tribes migrating southward fought among themselves over grazing land rights until confrontations with "The White Tribe" unified these factions against their single, greatest enemy. And while the conflict in South Africa is often painted with wide brushstrokes of solid color, some of the fiercest fighting has erupted within individual race groups.

The foundation of division that is the basis of Apartheid has caused a cold wind of fear of the unknown to blow over this otherwise verdant, abundant and peaceful land. A Mosotho woman, working as a domestic servant in a white household in Johannesburg, once explained, "We know how they live. We feed their children, wash their clothes, carry their garbage and trim their hedges. But they have no idea how we live. Most Makhoa (whites) have never

been to a homeland or a township or even in a combi (taxi)."

This lack of communication and understanding breeds fear and mistrust. Alan Paton, giving form to this fear writes, "Cry the beloved country for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply, let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much."

It is in answer to this fear, as well as to increasing economic pressure from outside South Africa that President F.W. DeKlerk has begun making greater concessions than any head of government in South African history. With the legalization of the outlawed African National Congress, the release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, deputy president of the ANC, and the ending of the four year state of emergency throughout most of the country, new channels for communication have opened where before stood only the solid wall of misunderstanding.

Conservative elements in the National Party who fear that change is occurring too fast and radical right wingers still fiercely loyal to the doctrines of Apartheid (and the white security and supremacy it assures), decry DeKlerk's concessions.

(see *Politics of Division* page 4)

The government detention since July, of 100 members of the ANC as well as the continued state of emergency in

Politics of Division

Natal suggests that Pretoria wishes to prove that they are still in control. While the government straddles the diplomatic fence promising change to the black majority and assuring security to the privileged minority, fundamental tenets of the system remain unchanged.

According to a World Press Review report on Apartheid, six times as much is spent to educate whites as is spent to educate blacks in South Africa. While black schools are overflowing, there are approximately 280,000 empty places at white schools. Meanwhile the security sector, police, military, and prisons, cost \$5.5 billion in 1989, or about 23 percent of the national budget.

The better educated minority appears to fear the possibility of a well educated majority. This fear of knowledge held in black hands extends to the workplace where highly skilled jobs are still largely reserved for whites.

Richard Manning, in *They Cannot Kill Us All*, interviews a white mineworker who expresses that fear when he asks, "Do you know how dangerous and explosive the situation is going to be if blacks get their hands on dynamite? We've been lenient. We've been charitable. But there is this hate situation there on the job, and I hate to say where its going to end. But

its not going to be pretty."

Recent faction fighting, which began in Natal province and spread to Soweto and other townships surrounding Johannesburg, has claimed over 400 lives and has the fear running higher than ever.

While some reports claim that the fighting represents tribal rivalry between Zulus and Xhosas; other reports suggest a more political motivation. "The ANC accused elements of South Africa's security forces of orchestrating the violence. The movement said it had evidence of forged pamphlets dropped in the migrant workers' hostels purporting to be from the ANC, conveying the impression that the ANC wanted to attack Zulus and drive them out of the townships. It is said the aim was to spread a climate of fear and terror in the ANC strongholds around Johannesburg and

to provoke a mass backlash, among blacks and whites, in support of tough repressive measures by the government to undermine the peace process." AP August 18, 1990.

This week (25 Aug.) Mandela requested a greater police presence in the townships attempting to stem the violence. Regardless of who initiated it, the killing must end before

negotiations can continue.

Once the violence is curbed one may still wonder, in what spirit does DeKlerk come to these negotiations? The Nation, in its May 28 story on Southern Africa reported that the government recently sold off the state iron and steel company, and the DeBeers company, a subsidiary of the giant Anglo-American business group, which dominates the mining industry, recently transferred control of more than half its assets to a new holding company in Switzerland.

Pretoria is safeguarding its economic hold in the event its political grip is broken by an ANC -led government. The Nation concludes, "The end of apartheid may bring South Africa fully into the modern capitalist world, substituting class for race as the basis on which a privileged minority dominates economic life. It will

not eliminate the country's gross disparities between privilege and privation; the battle for economic liberation will be won or lost only after the abolition of political apartheid."

Sources; The Nation May 28, 1990, World Press Review April 1990, Richard Manning, *They Cannot Kill Us All*, 1987.

Bits & Pieces

Betsy Bashaw, RPCV/Lesotho 1976-77, wrote to describe an African Festival held at a high school near her home in Barnet, Vermont. Betsy and former volunteers from other African countries organized exhibits, held an African fashion show, and gave a dance demonstration. Sounds like fun!!!

Malcolm McEwen, RPCV/Lesotho 1982-84, wrote to describe an interesting annual event called "Mountain Climb!" On August 5, 1990, mountain climbers all over the world scaled their favorite peaks and then sent photographs and descriptions of the climbs to Mountain Climb 1990, P.O. Box 4577, Davis, California 95617. In 1988, Mount Qoqolosing in Lesotho was the first Mountain climbed in the now annual event's first year. All of you FOL mountain climbers, set your sights high for next year.

Doug and Karen Grabia-Otto, RPCV/Lesotho 1980-1982, are enjoying their time in Rwanda. Their work is exciting and challenging and last spring they spent a wonderful week in the Akagera Game Park. They returned to Omaha last May for Karen to give birth, however, FOL does not yet know the gender of this new second generation Lesotho friend. The Ottos were scheduled to return to Rwanda in September.

Thembi's husband died suddenly earlier this year. FOL sends its sincere regrets. Thembi has been a special member of the Lesotho Peace Corps staff for many years.

FOL member Nomvula Cook recently held a fundraising event for Lesotho at her church. Details will appear in the next newsletter.

Friends of the Philippines sent details of a humorous compact disc and cassette being marketed by former Philippines volunteer Owen

Davis. Apparently Owens sings for almost an hour about his experiences from eating the family pet to meeting with the New People's Army – obviously not typical of experiences we all had in Lesotho, but possibly interesting none the less. If you wish to receive it, send \$10 for CD or \$7 for cassette plus \$1.50 for postage and \$.50 for additional items to:

Owen Davis,
c/o Too Big Music Company,
P.O. Box 469, Morgantown,
West Virginia 26507

**KEEP SENDING
THOSE LETTERS
NOW!!!**



**Next Submission Deadline:
January 15, 1991**

Peace Corps Partnership Program

The Peace Corps Partnership Program helps volunteers in-country obtain funding and resources for small scale development projects. The projects must be community initiated, planned and directed. The community provides at least 25% of the total project cost, and it provides all land, labor and raw materials.

A Peace Corps Volunteer who lives and works in the community helps plan the project and write the proposal.

Additionally, the volunteer disburses the funds and coordinates correspondence between U.S. and Overseas partners. The proposal is sent to the Peace Corps Partnership Office in Washington, which then contacts a broad cross-section of individuals, foundations, and businesses to raise funds for this project. Peace Corps pays all administrative costs of the Partnership

FYI

Program, so that every dollar donated goes directly to the overseas project. All donations are tax deductible. The Friends of Lesotho plans to work with the partnership program during the next few months on one or two small projects. We will be contacting you with project details and a special request for tax-deductible donations for this program. In anticipation of this opportunity, you may want to set money aside in your own accounts, or you may send a contribution now, which we will place in a special account for this program (The Friends of Lesotho is also a tax exempt organization). You may also want to begin to contact community organizations, churches, foundations, etc. in your area that might be interested in participating in the program.

–Tom Carroll, RPCV/Lesotho, 1964-66

Reflections...

I am still involved in the third objective of being a RPCV. I took my version of America to Lesotho. I learned many things about the Basotho — and myself. Each year I draw on my Peace Corps experiences to bring another part of the world back to my students. I want to enrich their education and to help them understand their responsibility to appreciate and use the benefits of their opportunities as citizens of the world community, which include others different, but not so different, from themselves.

— Alan Hansee, RPCV Lesotho, 1981-83

News FOL tax-exempt!

FOL is now officially recognized as a tax-exempt organization. All contributions, whether for annual membership dues or in support of any FOL project can be safely deducted from your taxable income!!! Keep supporting those FOL projects!!!

—Ted Hochstadt, RPCV/Lesotho 1966-68

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT RECORD > SUBMITTED BY BE
MARCH 29, 1990 MC

Lesotho's music reveals the nation's identity

"When autonomy is taken away, the one thing that people will cling to is popular culture," says anthropologist David Coplan. For the past several years Coplan's fieldwork has centered on Lesotho, an island nation of sorts, but one without a seacoast. South Africa surrounds the tiny country, controlling the lives of its people, indelibly coloring its politics and culture.

Lesotho is the only nation with human beings — the migrant workers who toil in South Africa's mines — as its leading export. The music which has sprung from the hardship of that environment caught the attention of Coplan when he first heard it in 1978. "I was shocked at how rich and full the music was," he recalled.

Coplan spoke to Robert Gordon's Anthropology 296 class, the Anthropology of Apartheid, Feb. 27. An associate professor in the Program in Comparative Humanities at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury, Coplan is a noted ethnomo-

sicologist. His *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, published in 1985, was a finalist of the Melville Herskovitz Prize as the best scholarly book on Africa.

Home for Lesotho's music is in the "shebeens" (house taverns) where women serve home-brewed beer and the music flows as well. Often backed solely by accordion and drum, many of the singers are women, telling their story in song. "They are songs of affliction," Coplan said. "It is a life that is tough on miners and on the women who are left behind. The women sing for their sisters, the personal experience of one reflects the experience of all."

Coplan maintains that the culture of Lesotho is created and kept alive by these people on the fringes of society, "artists often regarded by Lesotho's urban and intellectual elite as proletarianised marginals." Coplan said that many of the most famous singers and musicians are prostitutes or people with what might be

generally regarded as "unsavory personal histories."

Coplan noted that because of this many scholars in Lesotho have turned their back on these artists. Pointing out their loss, he said, "the life and breath of a culture is often found in unusual places."

"Village life revolves around these bars," Coplan said. "These are the people who are keeping Lesotho a living thing. They are great artists, literary geniuses.

Coplan drew parallels between America's urban rap singers and the Rastafarians of Jamaica. They are all people in difficult economic and social circumstances telling their stories and striving for freedom with their music. "The candle of the human spirit — creativity — still burns and lights the way out," Coplan said.

Coplan hopes to bring several of Lesotho's top artists on a performance tour of the United States in the future. His UVM visit was sponsored by the departments of Anthropology and Music and African Studies

Thomas Weave