

FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

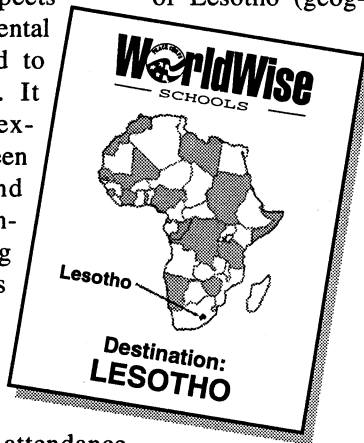
METSOALLE EA LESOTHO

2801 Spencer Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 589-4236 ■ Editor: George Fanelli

Summer 1994

"Destination Lesotho" Video

On June 1, 1994, Don Spicer attended a viewing of "Destination Lesotho," a videotape produced under the auspices of Peace Corps' World Wise Schools program. This program is designed for American school children from 3rd to 12th grade and combines a video and extensive curriculum covering all aspects of Lesotho (geography, economics, environmental issues, culture, etc.) geared to the grade level involved. It also includes the active exchange of information between the American school and schools served at by volunteers in Lesotho. The viewing was held at the Peace Corps office in Washington, DC and was introduced by Carol Bellamy, the Director of Peace Corps. Staff from the Lesotho embassy were in attendance and Friends of Lesotho was recognized by the Director for its assistance on the project. Elise Sprunt, a former Lesotho volunteer (1985-1987) developed the curriculum and Don's spouse, Nthakoana Peko, did translations on the video. A number of other members of FOL were also contacted and assisted with this project - Don wasn't able to get all of the names. In any event, thanks to all who participated.



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Reaffiliation with the National Peace Corps Association

The Board of Directors for FOL recently voted to reaffiliate with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) in order to increase the visibility of FOL and to obtain new members. The Board had voted in 1992 to change its affiliation with the Nation Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NPCA's predecessor) to an informal arrangement as the Board felt that continued formal involvement would send the incorrect message that FOL was strictly a returned Peace Corps Volunteer group. NPCA itself recognized this as a general concern of many and implemented its name change partly in response to this and to open itself up to a wider audience. In discussions Don Spicer had with Chic Dambach, the Executive Director of NPCA, he learned that NPCA planned a mass mailing to every individual who ever served in Peace Corps and that FOL would be included as an affiliated group in that mailing. Hopefully, we will get some new memberships.

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BCP and BNP Clash in Maseru

The March/April issue of Africa Report indicated fighting erupted in Maseru on 14 January 1994, as two factions of the Royal Lesotho Defense Force (RLDF) battled each other.

However, it was also reported the two factions were divided politically, one faction supporting the incumbent Basotho Congress Party (BCP) of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, the other in support of the opposition Basotho National Party's attempt to overthrow the nine-month old government.

Historically, the RLDF has been politically active since Lesotho's independence in 1966. It was aligned with the elected BNP following independence and remained supportive after the 1970 election which saw Mokhehle's BCP voted in. This support of the election allowed Prime Minister

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

A although I don't do this on a regular basis (but probably should) it seems appropriate to mention a few things.

First and foremost, on behalf of the Board and the entire organization, I want to thank Lisa Labella for all of the effort she put forth as our newsletter editor. She started as the editor in 1991 and put out her last issue this spring. Lisa produced a quality newsletter and really tried to focus on news about Lesotho that our members wanted to see. She also developed the format for the newsletter which is something we look forward to continuing with Candy Rogers. Lisa decided that compounding her already hectic schedule with graduate school and full-time teaching was the only way we would let her go so she went right ahead and did that! We, of course, wish her the best, thank her for her efforts and look forward to seeing her as "minister-without-portfolio" at our regular Board meetings. Thanks so much.

Fortunately for the group, one of our members has agreed to take on the task of newsletter editor for awhile to see how it goes. With a minimum of arm twisting, George Fanelli of Buffalo, New York will be our new editor. George and I were in Lesotho at the same time (1976-1978) and have remained close friends since those days. (For those of you who were there during those years, we plan to maintain our regular office hours and promise that a column on the subtleties of pinochle will not be forthcoming!) Thanks to George for taking on the job.

On a more serious note—as you can see from some of the other news in this issue, things in Lesotho are unsettled at best. While it is impossible to ever get the full story of what is going on, we will continue to do our best to let you know what we and others hear. Recently, it has proven to be all the more frustrating as Lesotho sometimes appears to take two steps backward for every step forward on its road to a democratic nation serving all of its people. While it was very encouraging to have had the opportunity to meet with Deputy Prime Minister Baholo and Foreign Minister Qhobela last fall (see the February 1994 newsletter) and to listen to their positive plans for Lesotho, it is equally discouraging to hear that Deputy Prime Minister Baholo was recently killed while in the process of being arrested. However, as is so often the case, day-to-day life in Lesotho goes on seemingly unaffected by the difficulties being experienced by the government. Friends of Lesotho will continue to report to its members as fairly as it can on what is happening within the country and in its own small way, continue to address the day-to-day needs of Basotho.



Don Spicer

MEMBER NEWS

Discussions About Lesotho

FOL recently received a card from Kris Peikert on 11 March 1994. Kris spoke on the Peace Corps experience at a local church and showed some slides on Lesotho. The church gave Kris \$25 which was generously sent on to FOL. Thanks muchly!

No Excuses

The most recent membership listing inadvertently omitted a current member. Please add to your listing:

Vickie Arnold
(Volunteer 1988-1990)
3810 Woodbine Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113

Our apologies!

Discussions About Lesotho

It was reported in the last issue of the newsletter that FOL is no longer funding scholarships through the U.N. Staff Education Fund in Maseru. The Board has received information from the Tuition Assistance Program run by Peace Corps Volunteers in Lesotho and it appears that this could be an excellent vehicle through which FOL can distribute its scholarship donations. A decision on this issue will be a high priority at the next Board meeting and we will let you know the outcome in our next newsletter.

World Wise Video on Lesotho

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The video is excellent and brought back a number of fond memories. Don also had the opportunity to review the curriculum for comments and was impressed with its breadth and the way it tailored its explanations and examples to the grade level involved. FOL is being sent a complimentary copy of the video which we will be happy to pass around. I strongly suggest that those interested in World Wise Schools and the possibility of using the program in their local school contact Peace Corps directly. You can contact Margaret Legowski, the director of World Wise Schools at Peace Corps at (202) 606-3294. ■

FOL FINANCES



Opening Balance of Funds on Hand – 1/1/93	\$2,067.16
+ REVENUE	
Dues	1,580.00
Extra Contributions	815.00
Interest on Bank Accounts	72.49
Subtotal Revenue:	<u>\$2,467.49</u>
- EXPENSES	
Operating Expenses:	
Duplicating ¹	249.89
Postage ²	805.61
Supplies	171.77
Newsletter ³	220.85
Subscriptions ⁴	130.00
Organization Costs	25.00
Subtotal Expenses:	<u>\$1,603.12</u>
- DONATIONS⁵	
Trickle-Up	500.00
Morija Museum	100.00
Peace Corps Lesotho/Volunteer Liaison Committee	250.00
Subtotal Donations:	<u>\$850.00</u>
ENDING BALANCE – 12/31/93	\$2,081.53

If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact Don Spicer at (H) (301) 890-1003 or (O) (202) 452-3195.

¹ Duplicating expenses have risen as we are no longer able to print for "free" the number of copies we need of our newsletters and directory. However, we will continue to avail ourselves of member generosity as it is offered.

² At least 90 percent of the postage is for newsletter and directory mailings to current or potential members; the remainder is for correspondence of the Board.

³ FOL pays for the organization, setup, processing, and layout of its newsletter.

⁴ FOL subscribes to the *Mirror*, a newspaper from Lesotho.

⁵ There were no donations made in 1993 to the scholarship fund.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

"How the Weather Was"

Some of you may remember the book written by Roger Kahn with the above title. Roger Kahn wrote another book, the one I actually want to allude to but which does not have as slick a handle as the title above, called "The Boys of Summer." The book recalled the Brooklyn Dodgers of the 1950s. It evoked memories, very fond memories, for numerous people about a team, a place, a time, and what you were doing and what was happening in the world around you at that time. The book did not end with the 1950s, however, the book brought us up to date with those people who were the 1950s. Brooklyn Dodgers.

I have the same feeling now as I begin this endeavor as editor of the FOL Newsletter. I think all of us who had the pleasure to live in Lesotho for any period of time have very fond memories of it. Unfortunately, we do not have someone like Roger Kahn to bring all of those memories back to life with a well written book that makes it to the top of the *New York Times* best seller list.

So we can try to bring back the memories of those times and places and faces as best we can. Or we can use this newsletter for some of those purposes. And we can also bring ourselves up to date with what we are doing.

There is an item elsewhere in this issue about a talk Kris Peikert gave at a local church about her Peace Corps service. Hopefully, as she was informing those who were listening about some of her experiences, she found herself smiling at those memories.

Well, this is our newsletter, and we will try to keep you informed as to what the Friends of Lesotho organization is doing, and we will try to keep you informed as best we can as to what is happening in Lesotho, and we will try to keep you abreast of what is going on here in the U.S. and around the world which affects Lesotho and the FOL. However, it would be very nice to hear from you all, to share some of the things you are doing with both your friends now and your friends from long ago. (As an aside, it would be very nice to share any information from your local newspapers about Lesotho itself since coverage of Lesotho here in Buffalo is sporadic.)

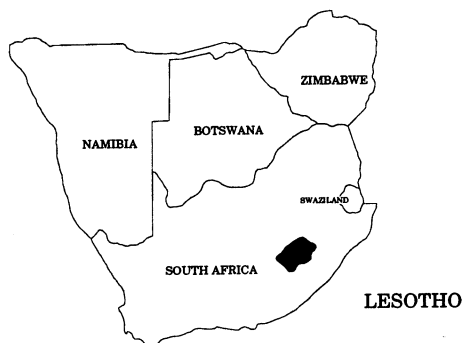
Hopefully, if you have any plans to speak about your Peace Corps experiences, or if you already have done so, drop us a line and let us know how it went, both for you and for those in the audience. And maybe, just maybe, some of you who read this newsletter will have some of those memories stirred and decide now is the time to bring us up to date on your doings.

Those memories of Lesotho are all flooding back to me now, and, finally, after a long, long time, being editor of this newsletter allows me to do some positive things with those memories. I can also feel a smile on my face. Hope to hear from you soon.

George Fanelli

Lesotho Embassy Announces Death of Deputy Prime Minister

The Lesotho Embassy in Washington, D.C. published a notice to all Basotho and interested persons in the United States informing them of the death of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Selometsi Baholo, on 14 April 1994. The notice blamed the Deputy Prime Minister's death on the rebellious Royal Lesotho Defense Forces stationed at the Makonyane military base. Further details were not available.



Drought Relief Provided

The Mirror reported in its 8 April 1994 issue that parts of Lesotho continue to experience the effects of a long drought and the British government has provided a grant of 695,000 Maloti for emergency food assistance. The grant was provided to the Save the Children Fund for assistance in the vulnerable drought areas of Mohakes Hoek, Mokhotlong, Mafeteng, Quthing and Qacha's Nek. This grant was in addition to a prior grant in 1992 for 2,400,000 Maloti for a nationwide program of emergency food distribution. The total of British drought assistance is now 5.6 million Maloti.

Ambassador Not Named

FOL president Spicer received a letter from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose to let us know that an Ambassador to Lesotho had not yet been named. Mr. Moose went on to state the U.S. government was pleased to see the free and fair elections in Lesotho and strongly supported its democratic transformation. He also stated the selection of ambassadors is a long and careful process and hoped to have a nominee for Lesotho shortly.

The Man Who Would Be King

The 1 April 1994 issue of *The Mirror* reported that former King Moshoeshoe II wants his position back. The former king sent a letter to Prime Minister Mokhehle which requested the government to reinstate him as King of Lesotho and dethrone his son, King Letsie III.

The former king, who arrived back in Lesotho on 20 July 1992, after two (2) years of enforced exile in Britain, had been given a tumultuous welcome by thousands in Basotho. He had been exiled by the military government in March 1990 for allegedly refusing to honor the dismissal of three (3) members of the ruling Military Council. The former king stated, however, he was exiled for his support of an Independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate corruption in high government offices.

Eventually, the man who exiled the former king, Metsing Lekhanya, was toppled in a coup in April 1991 which paved the way for the former king's return to Lesotho in 1992.

Prime Minister Mokhehle had many problems to face to solve this issue of the office of the King. One recommendation the Prime Minister made was setting a referendum and also establishing a commission of enquiry.



USAfrica Airways

USAfrica Airways now offers direct flights to Johannesburg from Dulles International Airport (just outside Washington, DC) with a refueling stop in the Cape Verde Islands. In the future, the airline hopes to have direct flights to Capetown and Harare in Zimbabwe. For further information, call 1-800-233-3424.

International FOL Newsletter

FOL president Don Spicer sent an introductory letter on 13 May 1994 to the Private Secretary of Prime Minister Mokhehle. The letter was sent on a recommendation of Lesotho Ambassador to the U.S. Kitleli in a letter to Don in December 1993. The Ambassador suggested Don write directly to the Private Secretary and offer to send a copy of the newsletter and all future mailings for the Prime Minister's information and, hopefully, enjoyment.

BCP and BNP Clash in Maseru

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Leabua Jonathan to void the election, refuse to hand over power, suspend the constitution, and imprison opposition leaders, including Mokhehle.

There was a limit to the RLDF's support of the BNP, however, and in 1986 it ousted Jonathan and imposed military rule over Lesotho. The military remained in power until the most recent elections held in March 1993.

The faction of the RLDF which supports the BPC is headed by Maj. Gen. Ramaena, the head of the military council at the time of the election. The other faction, supporting the BNP, is led by lower ranking officers.

The fighting which occurred was the result of an unsigned letter sent to Mokhehle on 11 January 1994 from the RLDF which demanded a 100% pay increase. The letter reportedly demanded the Prime Minister to respond to the request by 24 January. Mokhehle's response was that all public servants' salaries would be reviewed, not only the military's.

Soldiers in favor of the pay raise exchanged gun fire with soldiers in support of the Prime Minister's position at the Makonyane military base on 14 January. The political nature of this incident became apparent when the BNP supporters took base commander Lt. Col. Majare hostage.

A clue to the future of political developments in the region was provided by the appearance of South Africa's Foreign Minister Botha, with the approval of then South African President de Klerk and current President Mandela, in Maseru to help mediate negotiations to end the conflict.

The conflict continued, however, with the heaviest fighting on 23 January. Casualties by then were 5 soldiers and 11

civilians dead and unknown numbers wounded.

A truce was negotiated on 25 January by a Botswanan Organization of African Unity negotiator. The following day, southern Africa's leaders met in Gaborone, Botswana, to address the issue. The meeting was unprecedented for the first tete-a-tete between Zimbabwe's Mugabe and South Africa's de Klerk.

The meeting ended with the governments of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe forming a joint task force to recommend a "plan of action." One possibility was the formation of a peace keeping force for Lesotho.

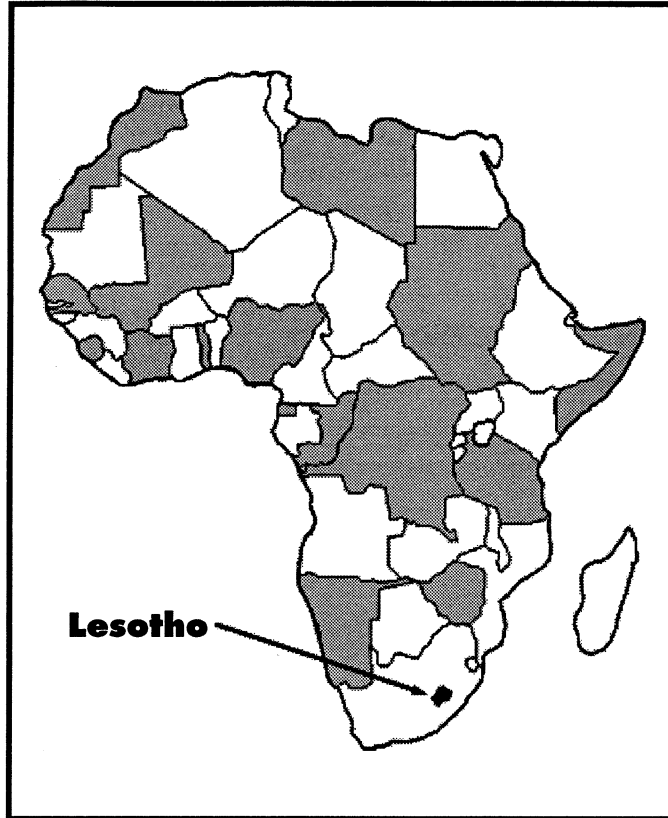
However, Basotho distrust for South Africa ran too deep for the actual placement of South African troops in Lesotho.

Finally, on 1 February, the British Commonwealth announced that it had brockered an accord between the two factions.

The troops have returned to their barracks, the government of Prime Minister Mokhehle is still in power, but the political differences of the two factions have not been resolved.

As a postscript to the article in *Africa Report*, the Lesotho newspaper, *The Mirror*

reported in its 13 May 1994 issue that the Royal Lesotho Mounted Police (RLMP) went on strike. Reportedly, the RLMP will not resume their normal duties until their demands are met, which at this time are a 60% salary increase and a corresponding increase in other benefits. It was reported that there was a great deal of looting and arson in Maseru, and later in Mafeteng and Leribe, as some liberties were taken due to the strike. It was alleged that some members of the RLMP were involved in several incidents of looting and arson. ■



Reaffiliation with NPCA

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In any event, as of April 6, 1994, Friends of Lesotho is again formally affiliated with NPCA and our name should begin appearing in all of their mailings. We are required to send \$1.00 per member annually to NPCA as part of our affiliation – the Board authorized \$200 for this purpose in March 1994 based on current paid up membership figures. Both FOL's and NPCA's membership forms must include membership information for the other group – you will note

that ours has been revised. NPCA dues are \$20 per individual and \$27.50 per family. If you include these dues with your FOL dues, we will send them on to NPCA for you. If you send your dues to NPCA directly and include your FOL dues in that mailing, you must specify FOL as your choice of the affiliated group you want to receive the dues so that they will send the funds to us. Let us know if you have any questions or concerns. ■

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