

Spring 2003

Metsoalle ea Lesotho

Friends Of Lesotho

4110 Denfeld Ave
Kensington, MD 20895
301 942-2751

Friends of Lesotho

Lesotho News



www.friendsoflesotho.org
Email:
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Free and Fair Elections

Lesotho held elections in May of 2002. The Lesotho Congress for Democracy won a 54 percent majority of the vote, and international observers determined that the elections were free and fair and the new government was put in place with an uneventful transition. The Lesotho Peoples Congress has challenged results in some districts through the courts and these are still unresolved. There have not been major protests. Lesotho has a new method of determining representation. Eighty seats are elected by district – the candidate with the most votes in each district wins. Forty more seats are elected by party, with each party apportioned seats based on the percentage of votes received in the election.

President
Don Spicer
Vice President
Vacant
Treasurer
John Hollister
Secretary
Vacant
Database/Website
Bill Dunn
Newsletter
Dorothy Holland
Legal Advisor
Ted Hochstadt

Problems

Winning the election was the easy part. The new government has many serious problems to deal with, including drought and food shortages, the HIV infection rate, and the economy. Three years of drought have put many people at risk of starvation. By the end of December the Red Cross had distributed food aid to 360,000 people and was making plans to provide aid to twice that number.

In his new year message to the country, King Letsie III warned Lesotho that the HIV infection rate is over 30 percent. He stated that if the crisis is not dealt with immediately, the ability of Lesotho to continue to exist was in question. The news reports point out the connection between HIV and the food shortage. Women produce most of the food and have been particularly hard hit by HIV. Many households are now headed by children or elderly, and there are many orphans. In a positive development, a German pharmaceutical firm has donated five years supply of an anti-HIV drug that is administered to pregnant women to prevent transmission to their babies. The government has started to develop a more open and comprehensive approach to dealing with the epidemic.

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New Jobs

Lesotho has positioned itself among the top five African countries who take advantage of the African Growth Opportunity Act (an initiative of the USA). This has led to growth in the manufacturing industry sector and an increase in job creation that is helping to address the issue of poverty in Lesotho. The government is also planning to take advantage of similar trade creation initiatives from the European Economic Union and the South African government. Some news stories have pointed out that some of the new jobs have poor working conditions and this has led to some controversy.

The governments of Lesotho and South Africa have started a joint project to deal with cross-border stock theft and auto theft. The problem is complex. Some of the thefts are organized in South Africa and use Lesotho as a staging area. In other cases, poverty in Lesotho has driven some people to begin raiding farms in bordering areas of South Africa. The South African police and defense forces and their counterparts in Lesotho have begun working on theft prevention strategies.



(Continued on page 2)

Lesotho News Summary — Continued

(Continued from page 1)

Biodiversity and Community Development



In another cross-border cooperative effort, the South Africans and Lesotho have begun a five year program to improve conservation along Maloti mountain areas that border the Eastern Free State, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. Some areas are protected by park reserves in South Africa, but those areas in Lesotho and outside the parks in South Africa are in need of conservation. The project is aimed at improving biodiversity in the region and contributing to community development through tourism.

When doing a news summary, it's hard not to focus on major stories such as HIV, food shortages, etc., and these issues are having a dramatic impact on Lesotho. But a news summary misses the less dramatic everyday stories that convey a more normal sense of life in Lesotho. If you are interested, three sources of news are:

Mopheme - <http://www.leo.co.ls/>

All Africa News - <http://allafrica.com/>

Google – <http://news.google.com/>, News tab, search on Lesotho.

Richard Rowan

Transition

Several years ago, former newsletter editor George Fanelli described Don Spicer as FOL's "President for Life". Certainly most of the membership has come to think of him that way. Unfortunately, Don himself was not one with such an opinion. When Don and Scott Brumburgh founded FOL in 1986, I'm sure that neither of them had any idea that they would still be guiding the organization 17 years later. The time for transition has come and on behalf of the membership I would like to thank both Don and Scott for their many years of service to our group.

New Board Members

Over the past three months, the FOL Board has been working to transfer Don and Scott's duties to other Board members. John Hollister has assumed a significant amount of the work by volunteering to take on the duties of Treasurer. Don is still active in a leadership role, but the time is fast approaching when that level of involvement will end. There are still many roles unfilled, and the remaining Board consists of only four people. The board has identified and begun to contact several people as possible new Board members. Some of those have been involved with special projects in the past, or were in leadership roles as PCVs.

Calling for Volunteers

Keep in mind that we are an organization of volunteers. Without volunteers to take on leadership roles, there is little we can do. There is always a place and a need for membership's participation on the Board. Please, if you can spare a few hours a month, you are needed. And with recent Board meetings held by teleconference, there's no need to be near D.C. If you are able to volunteer, please contact the Board (contact info on front and back pages of this newsletter). See page 6 for a letter from Don.

Bill Dunn 79-82

HIV/AIDS

**31% HIV
Infection
Rate**

The HIV statistics in Lesotho are grim. According to UNAIDS, the infection rate at the end of 2001 was 31 percent, the fourth highest in the world. It is hard to imagine the impact this epidemic will have on Lesotho. In his 2003 New Year's message to the country, King Letsie III told the Basotho that the HIV crisis threatens the very survival of the nation.

The impact has been widespread. According to the newspaper Mopheme, 1 in 5 children are now orphans and many households are now headed by children. The decrease in available jobs in South Africa has meant that more people rely on farming for food, but many households no longer have enough able-bodied adults to work in the fields. The epidemic has also hit professions such as teaching and health care very hard.

The fight against HIV has been hampered by an unwillingness to deal with the problem openly. That appears to be changing. Both the King and the Prime Minister have given major speeches about the epidemic, and the government is beginning to become more involved in prevention programs. Peace Corps and other aid agencies have programs focused on HIV education.

If you would like to help, Friends of Lesotho (FOL) helps Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) with funds for small projects, including HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Donations are welcome and tax deductible. You can use the membership form on page 11 and earmark your contribution for HIV/AIDS work.

Gerard Mathot, who has worked with many volunteers over the years, has helped develop an HIV/AIDS education program. He is also developing a hospice for people who are dying of AIDS and have no one to care for them. He can be reached at mathot@lesoff.co.za. It is also important that our elected representatives hear that more needs to be done to help countries like Lesotho treat and prevent HIV/AIDS.

Richard Rowan, 79-83

Your Dues Expiration Date is in the upper right corner of the mailing label!

Taipei American School Provides Scholarship \$\$\$



In June, 2002, FOL received a huge check (\$2,573.28) from Taipei American School in Taipei, Taiwan. This is the 3rd year in a row the students there have selected the Lesotho Scholarship Fund for their service-learning project. They held a Walk-For-Lesotho to raise the money. Sandy Puckett, RPVC Lesotho 72-74, is the team leader there, supported by Kathy Keenan, Peter Stanley and Angela Kocher. WOW, what a great group of teachers and students! Their hard work enables us to provide scholarships to a lot of eager students in Lesotho. Look at pages 4 and 5 to see some of the Tuition Assistance Project (TAP) Scholarship recipients.



Students participating in the Walk-For-Lesotho

Tuition Assistance Project Thank You Notes

TAP (Tuition Assistance Project) provides scholarships to primary and secondary school students based on academic performance and financial need. TAP has distributed over \$4000 in 2002. With tuition costs per year averaging \$15 for Primary School, and \$77 for High School, every cent can make a difference to a Masotho. TAP is administered by a committee of Peace Corps Education Volunteers. Some of the 2002 recipients are pictured here.



Dear TAP Committee

Ke Lebohile ho fumana lihlapiso tse tsoang ho TAP. Ke lakaletsa TAP katleho le Mahlohonolo.

Ke lakatsa hoba nese hake qetile sekolong. Ke na le lilemo tse q. Ke ngoanana. Litumeliso tse kholo ho TAP.

Ke 'na Liatile Hlapisi



Mabotle Mabusetsa and her mother 'me' Mahlalefang, a weaver at Eelloang Basali Weavers.



Your donations to TAP are tax deductible. See page 11.

Mabontša Kuenene says "I promise you I shall work hard at school. ... God bless Tuition Assistance Project."



Litsoanelo Matsikitlane is in form C at Gregg Memorial High School in TY.

Malibauka Justina Mateyisi attends St James High School in Mokhotlong.



More TAP Thank You Notes



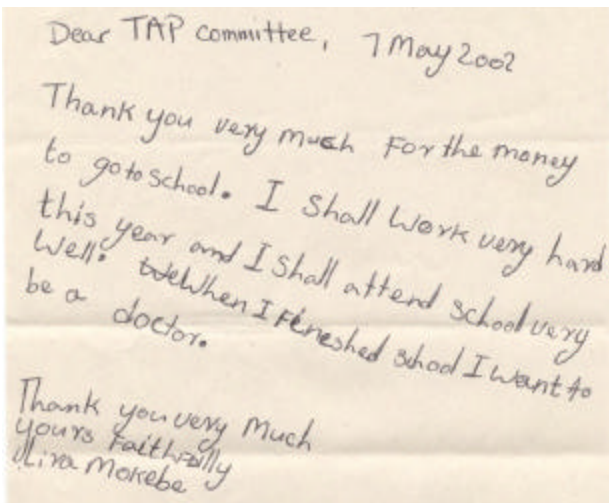
"Thank you ... for the money you gave me for the school fees. Now I went back to school."
Yours sincerely, Mbulelo Kolossa"
Shown here with mother Polo.



Dear TAP

Thank you for giving me money for school.
We play footballs we learn to speak and sign English.
My picture is of the airplane we visited at Maitsoa
International airport. Koa lalehang

Edward Maitsoa



Lira's fellow student Lererileng Mapapane also received TAP money. He wants to be a pilot.

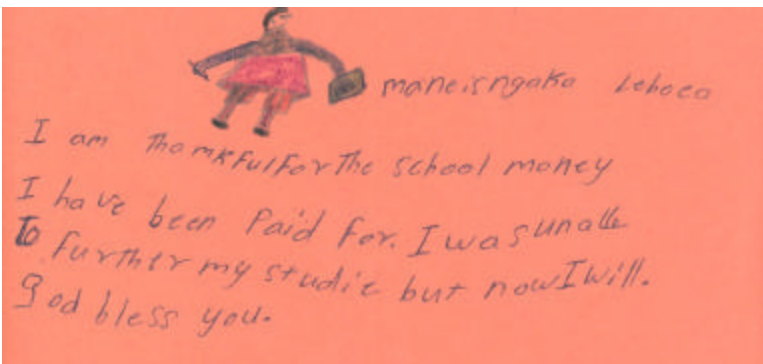


St Catherine's School
Maseru
6th May 2002
Dear Sponsor
I am here by to tell you how happy I am to be one of the luckiest

recipient of a 2002 TAP Scholarship. I will also like to give great thanks to you on behalf of my family.
Thank you TAP COMMITTEE. THANK YOU!

Yours faithfully

Sophia Mahalehle



I am thankful for the school money
I have been paid for. I was unable
to further my studies but now I will.
God bless you.

From Don Spicer, FOL President

As some of you folks are aware, Friends of Lesotho began in September 1986 during a gathering at the Lesotho Embassy in Washington that was being held as part of Peace Corps' 25th anniversary celebration. A group of roughly 25 of us got together and decided to form the group and I am pleased to say that most of those folks are still members! 17 years later, FOL still exists and has a pretty impressive record. We now have 385 members ranging from some who were in the first Lesotho group back in 1967 to some who have just returned. In fact, there are a few members whose involvement with Lesotho began in the late 1950s before Peace Corps.

FOL has donated over \$32,000

Over the years, we have been involved with a number of different efforts but I guess our most successful have been the ongoing support we have been able to provide to the scholarship fund and small project assistance. Over the life of the organization, we have donated \$25,000 to scholarships in Lesotho (pages 4 & 5) and over \$7,000 to small projects (pages 8 & 9). With dues remaining at \$10 per year since our inception, that is evidence of the generosity of our membership.



Thanks to Bill Dunn, we also have one of the best websites of any "Friends" group out there, we continue to issue a membership directory every two years, and, with Dorothy Holland's able assistance, we try to get a high quality newsletter out when we can. As I said, I think we have a pretty impressive record.

Don and Scott stepping down

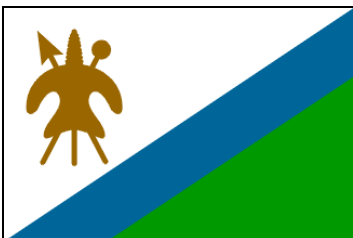
Where am I going with this? Well, after 17 years, it is time to turn the group over to someone else. Scott Brumburgh and I have been involved with the group since it began and we have traded off the Presidency a few times over those years – come to think of it, we haven't had a trade in awhile! Both of us are ready to relinquish our posts and have begun to do so. Scott has asked to be removed from the Board and we have honored his request so the positions of vice president and secretary are open. The group could not have achieved what it has without his efforts and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all of his work over the years. It has been a pleasure working with him.

I also have to thank Ted Hochstadt who has been our legal advisor since our inception and has agreed to continue in this capacity. For any non-profit, free legal advice is wonderful!

I have turned over the treasurer duties to John Hollister and will be stepping down as president in the very near future. The remaining Board members will continue to run the organization and need your support and some volunteers to help out and to fill positions on the Board. With everything going on in the world and Lesotho in particular, FOL is needed now more than ever.

I have enjoyed my tenure on the Board, would like to thank all of the old Board members who have helped out over the years and look forward to being a member of FOL for a long time. Finally, thanks to all of you for your continued support.

Don Spicer 76-78



Flag of Lesotho 1987 to present



New Members

HILAREA AMTHAUER
718 W 3rd Avenue
Denver, CO 80223

BARBARA BAUMAN-EAVY
A. LEE EAVY
28 Mountain View Dr.
Willsboro, NY 12996

NICOLE BOSUSTOW
1525 Spruce St., #26
Berkeley, CA 94709

CONSUELLA BROWN
1319 Prairie St., Apt B2
St. Charles, IL 60174

SUSAN CHUN
109 Brainerd Rd., Apt. 14
Allston, MA 02134-3724

GEORGE & JULIE CROMER
29720 Wildbrook Dr.
Southfield, MI 48034

FAYE FARMER
3333 S. Ventura Drive
Tempe, AZ 85282

KATHY FOX
2795 Christmas Tree Place
Oceano, CA 93445

STEVE GOERTZ
1124 Kensington Rd.
McLean, VA 22101

DAVID GORMAN
5401 S. Fairview Ave.
Downers Grove, IL 60515-5309

MICHELLE GRAVES
1913 McDougall Ave.
Everett, WA 98201-2458

ALLAN HANSEE
42 Reynolds Drive Ext.
Horseheads, NY 14845

DREW HARDGROVE
46046 E. Sunrise Dr.
Lexington Park, MD 20653

CHARLES & ELLEN HARVEY
1040 Stallion Dr.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-8207

PEGGY ANNE HAWKINS
7445 Melrose Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63130-1719

PAUL HESSE
1731 Upshur St., NW
Washington, DC 20011

DANIEL HOGAN
67 Temple St.
Newton, MA 02465

MARGARET JACKSON
1035 Oxford St.
Houston, TX 77008

DONNA JULIAN
707B San Mario Ct.
College Station, TX 77845-2140

DEBRA JACOBS KING
2741 Lake Dr.
Meadow Vista, CA 95722-9542

KIRK & NANCY KNIGHT
1516 Ingram Terrace
Silver Spring, MD 20906

PATRICIA KOEHLER
35446 Lake Edward Dr.
Zephyrhills, FL 33541

MARGARET LANG
33 Acorn Ridge
Las Flores, CA 92688

MARY LEDERER
University Post Office
P.O. Box 70401
Gaborone, Botswana

JOAN & LARRY LEGALLO
841 Broad Axe Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22903

WILLIAM LOCKHART
7105 Villa Hermosa
El Paso, TX 79912

RAE MC ENTYRE
101 Homestead Lane
Sparta, KY 41086

MICHELLE MITCHELL
29 Tamarac Ridge Circle
Shelton, CT 06484

KERI PARADIS
257 Kneen St. #16
Sheldon, CT 06484

KRISTEN PERRY
207 N. Magnolia
Lansing, MI 48912

MEGAN POTZINGER
Aich 3, Fischbachau 83730
Germany

THOMAS RODGERS
2222 N Beachwood Dr., #305
Los Angeles, CA 90068-2976

ANGIE ROLLET
5937 S. 2nd St.
Arlington, VA 22204

EDWARD SCHLESINGER
15 N. Milpas St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3301

KAREN SCHMITZ
25946 Carriage Lane
South Lyon, MI 48178-1561

WILLY & KARAN SCHREIBER
PO Box 10535
Marina Del Rey, CA 90295

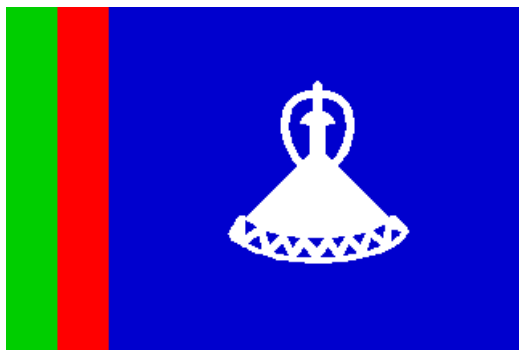
MAFONA SHEA
122 Ward Brook Rd.
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D.K. STANFORD
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SHERYL SULLIVAN
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DAVID VANCELETTE
11716 Thomas Hayes Lane
San Diego, CA 92126

COURTNEY WHEELER
100 E. Squire Dr., Apt. 5
Rochester, NY 14623



Flag of Basotholand, Lesotho 1966-1987

FINANCIAL ACTIVITES OF FOL IN 2002	
OPENING BALANCE OF FUNDS ON HAND – 1/1/02:	\$3,658.61
REVENUE:	
• Dues	1,605.00
• Extra Contributions *	4,313.28
• Interest on Bank Account	7.20
• NPCA Dues to be Rebated	465.00
SUBTOTAL REVENUE:	\$6,390.48
EXPENSES:	
• Duplicating	414.00
• Postage	367.93
• Miscellaneous	16.00
• NPCA Affiliation Dues	358.00
• NPCA Member Dues Rebates	465.00
SUBTOTAL EXPENSES:	\$1,620.93
DONATIONS:	
• Volunteer Liaison Committee	\$1,000.00
• Scholarship Fund (TAP)	\$4,500.00
SUBTOTAL DONATIONS:	\$5,500.00
ENDING BALANCE – 12/31/02	\$2,928.16
*Includes \$2,573.28 contribution from the Taipei American School.	

Volunteer Liaison Committee Projects

Volunteer Liaison Committee (VLC) provides grants to current PCVs for small projects which would otherwise be too small to be considered by major donor NGOs. Projects have included public education for HIV prevention, school supplies, womens' cooperatives, small business and craft coop startup materials, etc.). PCVs in country determine how best to use the funding.



Crochet hooks and yarn for projects, in Quthing and Mt. Moorosi. One goal for this project is to produce items for sale to provide income and self reliance.



Fran Renehan, PCV organized several projects, including this beautiful map of Africa.

To contribute to the VLC, see the membership form, page 11.



Summer Brandt, PCV with the Qacha's Nek Art Club, saying thanks for materials. The club's members are standard 5 students from five community schools in Qacha's Nek who meet on Saturday mornings. Besides art, they work on building self confidence and awareness.

Nancy Bailey, PCV Butha Buthe, used a grant to help fund a trip for 18 members of the Phelandaba Primary Environmental Club. The group did projects at Tsehlanyane National Park in exchange for the lodging. Photo shows the Bo-ausie (girls) building rock water bars and obviously have a lot of fun.



VLC Continued: Other projects VLC helped fund: painted maps and other educational projects, a video collection for a small income project, a demonstration rabbit hutch, a camera work shop for another small business co-op of women, an environmental education program, and a tree nursery which has about 200 trees.



The new ball at St Joseph's PreSchool in Makhotlong is thoroughly enjoyed.



David Kasper, PCV, purchased an Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus, and Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English, both of which the students use constantly.



Virginia Humphreys, PCV, secured paint and brushes to decorate the walls of the Mohale's Hoek Hospital childrens ward.



Materials for painting the alphabet on the wall of the Itumeleng Primary School, Standard 3 classroom, organized by Jean and John Thornley.



A soccer team from a group for young people not attending school in Moorosi, Quthing received a soccer ball and pump through PCV Robin Gordon's efforts. This group is also working on income generating projects.

VLC also provided a grant to assist with their first annual "Take our children to work" day in Lesotho (right). Over 60 students and 40 professionals participated.



"Thanks you for your continued support of Peace Corps Lesotho projects. You help make a lot of great ideas become possibilities." Jean Thornley.



Basotho Cultural Music

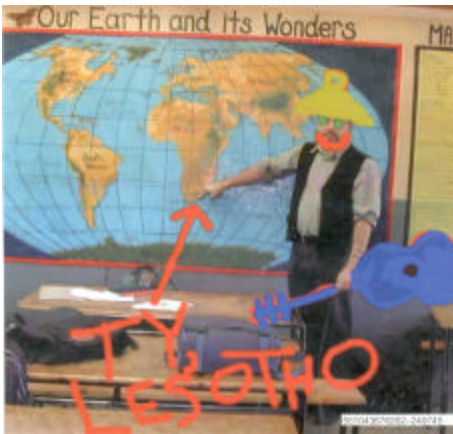
Catholic Technical School of Leribe has made a CD of their choir which they are selling to raise funds for their school. The 84 minute CD includes the national anthem and many more songs, almost all in Sesotho.

You can help support the school by ordering a CD.

To order a CD, send a check for \$10, made out to:
Don Hanford (RPCV, Leribe '00-02)

Address:

CTSL Choir Music, c/o Don Hanford
814 College Ave., Twin Falls, ID 83301.



PCV Cultural Music

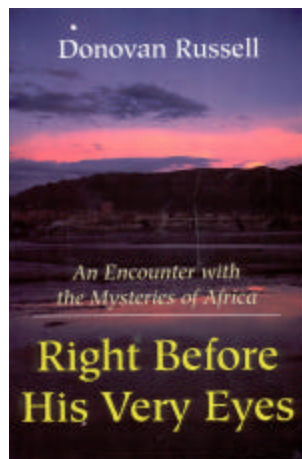
Paul Bloch (AKA Alazka) has a CD of songs and music written as a PCV in Lesotho. He is donating all of his proceeds from the sales of the CD to FOL's Tuition Assistance Program.

The CD is **FEELA**, and is available on the web at: mp3.com/alazka

FEELA opens with *Unwanted Overture*, incorporating ambient sounds of life in Lesotho. Moves on to *Peace Corps Peak* and *The Lovest Job (You'll Ever Tough)*. There's a delightful a cappella tribute to all the good things to eat just over the border in *Ladybrand*. *Basotho Blues* is a serious acoustic blues piece about King Moshoeshoe I and the birth of the nation. Several Peace Corps/ Lesotho-oriented love songs follow, including *Peace Corps Romance*.

Although we all have different musical tastes, you'll find at least one tune to make you cry, make you laugh, or provide at least one flash back!

Highly recommended!



And a Book

Right Before his Very Eyes An Encounter with the Mysteries of Africa, by Donovan Russell.

A fiction story about Lesotho and South Africa that looks at western development workers trying to work in another culture. The author also feels that the struggle against ignorance, illiteracy, poor health, poverty and discrimination toward women is the real long term war against terrorism. The story has a special relevance to the professional and personal dilemmas that Peace Corps volunteers and other development workers face. 318 pages, \$22.95.

Can be purchased online from Barnes and Nobel, or Amazon.



Still more TAP recipients:

Thabiso Thabisi, Tieli Mojoka, Morake Makunya and 'Me' Adelina Mosue, headmistress of St Peter's RC Primary School. The three boys are recipients of TAP scholarships.

Friends of Lesotho

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Annual membership in Friends of Lesotho (\$10 per person) \$ _____

Additional contribution to Friends of Lesotho \$ _____

Total to FOL \$ _____
(All dues/contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.)

FOR RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS ONLY:

Annual membership in the National Peace Corps Association - \$35 individual \$ _____
or \$42.50 for family - see note 1 below

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY NEW OR CHANGED INFORMATION FOR THE FOL DIRECTORY

Check if no changes

Address _____

YEARS IN LESOTHO:

Peace Corps _____ to _____

Other _____ to _____

Home phone (____) _____ Work phone (____) _____

Village _____

email _____

District _____

list email on web site? yes no

Work Program _____

Family Members: _____

Current Occupation/Employer: _____

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Friends of Lesotho (FOL) is affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). If you have included NPCA dues, we will forward them to NPCA. If, however, you choose to send your FOL dues directly to NPCA in response to their membership solicitation, you must specify FOL as your choice of affiliated group to receive credit for dues. NPCA membership is optional. NPCA multi-year discount available, see www.rpcv.org.
2. Unless you specify otherwise, FOL will provide your name and address to an individual requesting information about an old friend or to a prospective volunteer to Lesotho. If you do not want your name released to organizations, please check the appropriate box below.
 - a) Organizations selling merchandise and publications
 - b) Professional organizations concerning employment
 - c) Other non-profit organizations.

For FOL use only (please DO NOT complete this information):

Check # _____ Amount \$ _____ Member Since _____ New _____ Source _____

Renew Date _____ Expires _____ No. of Members _____ NPCA _____

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www.friendsoflesotho.org

Email: wdunn@friendsoflesotho.org

Clothing Manufacturing in Lesotho



Outside Maseru, women rush to work at the new garment factories.

Credit: Jennifer Schmidt

US trade legislation is having an effect on Kingdom of Lesotho. The African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) has reduced or lifted tariffs on hundreds of items produced in Africa. Nigeria has benefited the most, exporting millions of barrels of oil duty free into the US. However, Lesotho has also seen the effects of AGOA.

Over the past two years Lesotho has become Africa's leading exporter of textiles to the US. Eleven new clothing factories have popped up in the kingdom and more are being built. These factories make clothes for export to US for Wal-Mart, Kmart, Sears, and The Gap. The garments are imported into the US duty free. Duties as high as 30% make the cost of clothing from Lesotho 30% less than similar clothing made in Asia.

Ambassador Richard Loftus said Agoa has created over 30,000 textile jobs, although Lesotho still remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Unemployment is still around 50%, 1/3 of the population is HIV+, and hundreds of thousands of residents are dependent on foreign food aid to avoid starvation.

Many of the factories are owned by Taiwanese investors, which rankles some in Lesotho. However the additional tax revenue funds schools and other social programs essential to Lesotho's survival.

Working conditions in the factories are similar to clothing factories all over the world. Women sit in long lines leaning over sewing machines for 10 hour days with a 1 hour break for lunch. The factories don't always pay enough to support a family but it is better than most other jobs in the country. There is a Textile Workers Union.

National Public Radio carried a short piece on March 12th Morning Edition on AGOA and Lesotho. This article is from Dorothy Holland's notes from that show.

Before AGOA,
Lesotho's major
export was
water.