



FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

# METSOALLE ea LESOTHO

Second Quarter 2014  
Newsletter

## Literary Festival Comes to Lesotho

By **Zach Rosen, *Ba re e ne re* Co-Organizer.** RPCV 2010-11, Maseru District,  
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“Once upon a time...” in the Sesotho language is “*Ba re e ne re*,” literally, “They say it was said that...,” a phrase that begins many Sesotho folk tales. This September, Basotho people will have an extraordinary opportunity to come together to share their stories and discuss how to promote literacy and creative writing in the Mountain Kingdom.

The *Ba re e ne re* Literature Festival, initiated in 2011 by a visionary Mosotho creative writer, ‘M’e Liepollo Rantekoa, aims to advance the literary arts in Lesotho and to connect Basotho artists with others in the region and around the world. The first year of the festival was well attended, attracting writers, editors, publishers, poets, professors, ministers, and students. After ‘M’e Liepollo tragically passed away in 2012, her friends and family united to carry on her vision.



2014 Festival Director Lineo Segoete reads to children in Morija.  
Photo credit: Meri Kyoky

From September 5-7, 2014, *Ba re e ne re* will be back to again offer a series of exciting activities to create venues for international exchange between Southern African literary artists and to cultivate the next generation of Basotho readers and writers. Under the 2014 theme, *Inspiring the future and preserving the past*, activities include:

- Book readings, performances and discussions with local and international authors
- Workshops featuring creative writing and how to get published
- Children’s activities (eg., bookmaking) and school writing competition awards
- Keynote lecture
- Open mic night and exhibitions by local artists
- Updates and links on a new Facebook page, [facebook.com/barelitfest](https://facebook.com/barelitfest)



Leipollo Rantekoa asks children about their favorite book in 2013.  
Photo credit: Zach Rosen

The *Ba re e ne re* mission guides the festival’s production team in carrying on the tradition of creative thinkers who have found a wealth of artistic inspiration in Lesotho’s mountains and valleys. From Thomas Mofolo to Zakes Mda to *Ba re e ne re* founder Liepollo Rantekoa, these path blazers inspire Basotho to dream big and tell their unique stories. Friends of Lesotho helped make the 2014 festival possible with a generous grant.

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Newsletter Features Clickable Links!!

Download the newsletter from the FOL website [www.friendsoflesotho.org](http://www.friendsoflesotho.org) and you can click on all the website addresses.



## Litaba tsa Lesotho (News from Lesotho)

**Compiled by Ella Kwisnek, ekwisnek@msn.com, (RPCV 1992-94, Lesotho Agricultural College)**

### **Sani Pass to be Paved**

Nineteen kilometers of gravel road from Old Good Hope Trading Post to the summit of the Sani Pass at the border post are to be paved.

Although some environmental and tourism groups opposed the paving, the project, estimated to cost R887 million, is slated to go forward.

Find the full story online at <http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5955>

### **Vandalism Costs Telecommunications Firm Millions**

Econet Telecom Lesotho, a telecommunications provider, is estimated to have spent M3.7 million between March and May, 2014, to repair vandalized equipment.

According to an Econet spokesperson, in addition to theft of equipment, a major problem is damage caused by contractors working on roads, water and power infrastructure.

The vandalism has led to disruption in service.

To address the problem, the company is working on replacing copper cable with fibre optic cable; it has offered a M20,000 reward for information that will assist in the arrest and conviction of those vandalizing equipment; and it is calling for tougher laws to discourage the vandalism.

Read more online at <http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5917> and <http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5979>

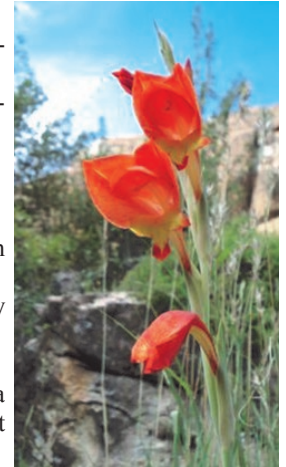


Photo by Pamela Rogers

### **Encouraging Investment**

The Prime Minister of Lesotho, Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, recently spoke at the Lesotho Investment Forum to encourage investment in Lesotho. Areas highlighted for investment included mining, manufacturing, agriculture, financial services, infrastructure and tourism. He touted Lesotho's young labor force, flexible tax incentives, competitive wage rates and proximity to lucrative markets in the Southern African Development Community. However many obstacles, such as access to land, remain as significant obstacles to investment in Lesotho.

In a related story, the Ministry of Finance has proposed to abolish a stamp duty charged to large companies for making changes in their financial assets. The proposed removal of the duty is designed to eliminate one barrier to economic growth and to create a more enabling environment for business in the country.

Read more online at <http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5800> and <http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5976>

### **Bank Signs MOU with Women's Groups**

Arron Banks of Southern Rock Insurance Company, based in Gibraltar, and three Lesotho women's groups (Federation of Lesotho Women Entrepreneurs, Chebelopele Association (*Lingoetsi*) and *Tsa Bo Moshemane Ha Lijeoe*) signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

The goal of the agreement is to establish a credit facility for women entrepreneurs who are often unable to obtain funding from mainstream banks. By empowering women in this way, it is hoped that economic growth and sustainable development will follow. Read more at

<http://publiceye.co.ls/?p=5796>

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## Friends of Lesotho Annual Report

Friends of Lesotho is doing impressive work. Check out the 2013 annual report to see all the exciting projects, lists of new and loyal donors, and superb photos. You can see it online at

<http://www.friendsoflesotho.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Friends-of-Lesotho-2013-Annual-Report-FINAL.pdf>

### **Shopping?? Please use FOL's link to Amazon.**

Amazon donates 6% to Friends of Lesotho year round, with no extra charge to the customer, if you access their site through Friends of Lesotho's Web page, <http://FriendsOfLesotho.org>



## Bill Dunn—A Legacy for Lesotho

Bill Dunn recently transitioned from 27 years on the Board of Directors of Friends of Lesotho. Bill leaves a legacy as an exemplary RPCV and Friend of Lesotho. As Past Presidents and Board members, we wish to pay tribute to Bill for his many years of dedication to FOL.

Over these years, Bill had a unique perspective to share, since he had been with the organization since its founding in 1986. One of his first accomplishments was to establish and maintain the FOL database. As Don Spicer recalls, “When FOL was founded in 1986, Bill still lived on the eastern shore of Maryland. While I cannot remember whether he was at the initial meeting at the Lesotho ambassador’s house when FOL started, for all intents he was there at the beginning and immediately took on the roll of database chair. He worked very closely with Scott Brumburgh, me, and the rest of the Board, getting the first database set up to produce important directories – past Volunteers and Country Directors, donors, members, lists of Basotho in the US, etc. This was still the era of paper copies so the research and listings were invaluable. Bill was always looking for better ways to do things and using changing technology to push FOL along, something that was not Scott’s or my strong point! Even after he moved to Alaska, he did not miss a beat and kept right on working with the Board. He was the perfect person to push FOL forward after Scott and I retired in 2003 and made great changes to broaden all of FOL’s efforts, always a pleasure to work with and most certainly committed to FOL.”



Bill’s personality and leadership style were evident early on. Richard Rowan had the good fortune to be in the same training group with Bill in Lesotho. Even back then, Richard remembers that “Bill had an air of steadiness about him. Over the years, Bill led FOL through revitalization and growth, and helped expand the Board to include members from beyond the Washington, DC area. As President of FOL, he provided the same sort of steadiness and patience I had earlier noticed in Lesotho. His style of leadership was what was needed to help a new crop of Board members start to feel comfortable in their roles on the Board. Under Bill’s leadership the Board was reorganized into committees and started to spread the work around. This had the effect of shortening up Board meetings from 2+ hour affairs to a more manageable length of time.”

John Hollister reminds us that “FOL went for a while with no President back in 2003. FOL almost vaporized back then, and Bill was the one of the key people to step in and keep the ball rolling. And he got more than he bargained for with the interim position and was very patient about it. That on top of all the other support duties he provided says a lot. I’m pretty sure FOL would have gone into hibernation or died had it not been for Bill’s willingness to step up and serve as “Interim President,” maintain the database and develop the website in 1996.”

Kevin Freer compiled a history of FOL and learned that when Bill offered to serve as President in 2003, a small group kept the organization alive, making it possible for FOL to emerge stronger during Bill’s tenure in office. It was during this period that the Board first began to have meetings by conference call, thus enabling a national Board to operate and grow the organization. Beginning in 2003 and continuing to the present, FOL established a board of directors that formalized policies and differentiated roles and responsibilities of officers, committee chairs, and task forces. The Board also began to recruit non-board members to serve on committees. Bill took on the role of President and John Hollister, Dorothy Holland and Ted Hochstadt helped to provide continuity and stability to the organization. What made this growth possible was Bill’s ability to recruit new members to serve in important roles and to eventually begin to develop board leadership, nominations and finally to rotate officer and board positions.

The Board election in the fall of 2004 was the first election since 1988, so everyone had agreed to serve in a voluntary / appointed capacity for one year. Bill continued as President from 2004-2008. New officers were elected to fill various roles and committees were formed to further accomplish the specific tasks. Committees included Membership, Donations/Distributions, Fundraising and Nominations. In addition, short term Task Forces were appointed for By-Laws and the Annual Meeting. Each of the Board members took on new responsibilities to make these changes possible. Bill provided wise counsel to succeeding FOL presidents. He also continued to advise other board members and committees after the rotation of officers emerged. Bill worked diligently to transition the database and membership committee work before he handed over these responsibilities in 2013.

Bill’s legacy extends far beyond the organizational development of FOL. Reflecting on Bill’s contributions, Richard Rowan reminds us, “Bill has certainly done more than his fair share for FOL and on behalf of beneficiaries of funds sent to Lesotho. Because of Bill’s commitment, many people in Lesotho have benefitted from the generosity of FOL. Many Basotho students have been educated, villagers have gotten access to clean water, schools have been improved and people have received medical education and treatment. PCVs have received funds for projects that have helped them be successful in their communities. These are all part of Bill’s legacy. Many people owe Bill a debt of gratitude.”

*Contributors: Past FOL Presidents Don Spicer, Richard Rowan, Kevin Freer, and John Hollister, Treasurer*







## TAP Funds Boosted by Taipei American School

Lesotho, USA, and Taiwan are all connected by 1972 RPCV Sandy Puckett. Sandy was 21 when he served in Lesotho. After he left Lesotho, Sandy got a degree, traveled, taught, and lived an exceptionally interesting life. For the last 16 years of his life, though, he called Taipei “home” and was a teacher at Taipei American School in Taiwan. After his death, students and former colleagues of Taipei American School have raised money annually, and sent it, through Friends of Lesotho, as a contribution to Peace Corps Lesotho’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). TAP makes it possible for dozens of secondary school students in Lesotho, recommended by currently-serving Peace Corps Volunteers, to obtain tuition scholarships to continue their education. In 2014, Taipei American School students and teachers contributed \$10,600 to TAP.

In Taipei, Taiwan, teacher Kathy Keenan wrote to Friends of Lesotho, “Our students are learning about the importance of helping those who are less fortunate, and that each student can make a difference. They have been excited to participate in this service opportunity. We are pleased to be able to help the children of Lesotho. We know that education is one of the best ways to help the nation of Lesotho to continue to prosper.”



Photo Credit: Lynn Minderman

RPCV Sandy Puckett died of a heart attack at age 58 in 2009. A mathematics teacher, artist, world traveler, and author of children’s books, he was a lover of portraits made of objects, tromp l’oeil, optical illusions, animorphs and hidden images. Friends of Lesotho is proud to be a part of one of Sandy’s finest legacies, the magic of connecting diverse parts of the world.

Personalizing the TAP connection between Friends of Lesotho and Peace Corps Lesotho, Board Member Lynn Minderman traveled to Lesotho from New York in March 2014 and met both with staff TAP coordinator, M’e Malitaba Hlabana , as well as the Peace Corps Volunteer TAP Committee, David Wickland, Shawn Joshi, and Keegan Mackin, concerning the TAP Program. Lynn commented, “This committee of Volunteers is an amazing group of young men who came to the meeting with prepared agendas, application process forms, and ideas about how the TAP program could be improved.” TAP continues to bring together, from near and far, the efforts and good will of many.



## Interview with Filmmaker Andrew Mudge

*This interview was excerpted from on-line newsletter of Heartland Film, an Indianapolis nonprofit arts organization founded in 1991 with the mission to inspire filmmakers and audiences through the transformative power of film. Website and events, [www.heartlandfilm.org](http://www.heartlandfilm.org)*

Andrew Mudge is a filmmaker based in Brooklyn, New York. He has directed numerous award-winning short films, documentaries, and music videos. A Sundance alumni, his music video *Knights of Bostonia* won the MTV viewer’s choice award. His debut feature film, *The Forgotten Kingdom*, set in Lesotho, was selected for the 2012 IFP Filmmaker Labs, and has garnered top awards at over 10 international film festivals, as well as three awards and seven nominations from the African Movies Academy Awards. When not making films, Andrew enjoys kayaking and kale salad.



Photo Credit: Heartland Film

**Heartland Film:** Give us an update on *The Forgotten Kingdom* since it was shown at Heartland last October 2013. Any big updates?

**Andrew Mudge:** We’re just winding down the festival tour, which has been fantastic, with over 10 festival wins – either audience awards or jury prizes.

We also took the film back to Lesotho in March 2013 on a three week screening tour, which was absolutely the highlight of the year so far. We drove all around Lesotho showing TFK on a blow-up movie screen, under the stars, among roaming shepherds and their woolly flocks. Our audiences consisted of mostly people who had never even seen a film before. They’d shriek with delight when they recognized a location where we filmed, or someone who was in the film as an extra.

Earlier this week we returned from Nigeria where *The Forgotten Kingdom* had nine nominations at the African Movies Academy Awards. We ended up winning Best Sound Design, Best Cinematography, and Best Child Actor – for Lesotho’s own Lebohang Ntsane, who boarded a plane for the first time in his life to travel to Nigeria to pick up an “African Oscar!” It was one of the greatest moments of my life to see him jump up on stage to accept that award. I found him in a tiny school house in Lesotho. He had never acted before in his life! It was one of those rare moments in life where I could say, “Okay, I’ve made a difference here.”

**Meet Andrew at upcoming debuts around the USA!** *The Forgotten Kingdom*, will be a featured film at Heartland Film Festival Summer Rewind in Indianapolis, Indiana during late June 2014. Mudge is looking for Lesotho RPCVs to introduce the film in other USA cities. Write him at [andrewmudge@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmudge@gmail.com) if you are interested.





## Featuring Anri Tanabe—CHED Volunteer

*Beginning with Anri, future Metsoalle ea Lesotho issues will feature reflections by a current Volunteer.*

*Khotso bakhotsi ba ka!* (Greetings, friends!) My name is Anri Tanabe from Los Angeles, California, or as they call me here, *Ausi Lineo Matete*. I am currently a Community Health and Education (CHED) 2012 Volunteer living in the awesome Mokhotlong district.

**Learning Lesotho was my post:** After four years of studying at Soka University of America (SUA) in Aliso Viejo, California to obtain my Bachelor’s Degree in Liberal Arts, I applied to Peace Corps because I wanted to gain hands-on experience working in a community abroad and “to live a contributive life,” a principle mission of my alma mater. Compared to other volunteer programs, Peace Corps seemed like the best and most exciting option. I convinced my parents that it would be an ideal way for me to pursue my passion for Latin America by volunteering there for two years; little did they know I would get placed in Africa. Since my mind was set on the southern Americas, I had very little knowledge and very few preconceptions about Lesotho. I just absorbed whatever came my way each day and looking back now I can’t remember whether I was surprised, confused, or amused –probably feeling a combination of all of those in the midst of shivering through the coldest winter of my life.

**Current projects and impressions:** My host organization, which is funded by the US-based President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), assigned me to work with community support groups which unfortunately spend a lot of time filling out forms rather than providing quality services. But I live in a camp town and have eagerly picked up other projects like teaching life skills and dance at two one high school and one primary school, organizing a ‘healthy living’ mural with HIV+ youth of the “teen club”, starting a drama club with my Mosotho counterpart, and hosting creative writing sessions at my house.

Through all of these projects and experiences, including every success and failure, Lesotho and the Basotho have found a huge place in my heart.

Some of the cultural insights that have made a deep impression on me consist of the daily challenges faced by Basotho. During my time here, I have watched Basotho deal with financial struggles, illnesses, deaths, marital/relationship problems, and many other challenges. People around the world struggle with these same problems; but in the U.S. and other developed countries we expect and have access to more reliable support systems in dealing with these issues. Basotho have learned to deal and cope with these issues in their own ways and I often find myself truly admiring their strength.

On a lighter note, some of the things I will miss about Lesotho are: the way *bo-ntate* dance with the spirit and energy of small children, the hospitality of *Bo-’m’e* who immediately take me under their wings, the eagerness of children wanting to greet a *lekhooa*, and of course the beautiful scenery of the Mountain Kingdom.

**My changing views:** Since I have been here, I have asked myself questions like, “What would help make Lesotho ‘better’? What are the urgent challenges that need to be addressed?” Onto questions like, “Who defines ‘better’ and how can we go about creating changes that very few people seem to support? And what can I really contribute?” I still have not found the answers. However, from living in Lesotho, I have seen and learned the importance of truly understanding a culture, the people, and the environment before jumping in to try and create major changes from the outside based on what I believe is “helpful.” Foreign organizations with good intentions too often do more damage than good, trying to help a country by creating a dependency, instead of empowering the people to solve their own challenges. International development requires deep understanding of what the people desire, and much patience, time, perseverance, and hope.



Left Photo — Creative writing group July 2013. (L to R): Abuti Khotsofalang, Abuti Tatolo, Me, Abuti Tumisang, Ausi Mathene Khama, front Abuti Kabelo Khama  
Center Photo — Anri Tanabe; Right Photo — Healthy Living mural painted at the Mokhotlong Youth Center, May 2013. (L to R): ED 12 PCV Nick Mast, HTC Counselors Ntate Kaiza, M’e Limpho Saana, CHED PCV Anri Tanabe, plus one counselor .





## Amy's Ashes

By **Don Spicer**, RPCV 1976-78 in Pitseng, Leribe District, spicerda@verizon.net

*Ed Note:* RPCV Volunteer Amy Friedheim served as an Education Volunteer in Lesotho in Kolonyama, Leribe, from 1981-83. Amy died July 2013 at a hospice in San Francisco from lung cancer. She was 53.

My wife Nthakoana Peko and I, the “we” of this article, made a trip to Lesotho in January/February of 2014 and were able to go to Kolonyama High School to meet two of the three students awarded scholarships in memory of RPCV Amy Friedheim, who passed away in 2013. We also laid to rest the last small portion of Amy’s ashes. We knew Amy well during her time serving on the Board of Directors for Friends of Lesotho when she was in Washington DC in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, and we always enjoyed seeing her at Friends of Lesotho and Peace Corps events in subsequent years. So much energy she had!

Nthakoana and I went to Kolonyama High School on February 3, 2014, a very cold and very rainy day. Those that know the road to Kolonyama will appreciate hearing that our rented car’s underside took quite a beating getting there and we are sure pieces of it remain there yet.

We met in Kolonyama with Ntate Lefu Heqoa, a teacher at the school who had been communicating with Erica Moroney, an RPCV teacher at Kolonyama High School from 2004 to 2006. They had worked with teachers and principal Ntate Mokhomo to select three students for the newly-created Amy Friedheim Memorial Scholarships.

The recipients were not necessarily the top academic students at the school, many of whom were able to pay their own way, but solid, hard-working students in serious financial need. Three Form E students were selected - Matseliso M., Ntsoaki T. , and Mahlape K. A total of R12,735 (roughly \$1,200) was disbursed to cover uniforms, school fees, books, and exam fees. Unfortunately, only Matseliso and Ntsoaki were at school that day, so we took photos with them and brought back their letters of thanks. From what we were able to understand, the third student, Mahlape, is an orphan who is raising her younger brother. It seems a distant relative had shown up at her house the night before, dropped off a two-year-old, and left. Mahlape could not leave the child unattended but was in the process of trying to make other arrangements so she could get to school on this important day. It is amazing what some of these young students have to deal with. In any event, it was nice meeting the girls; one forgets how shy (but very thankful) they can be!

Concerning Amy – we know she will appreciate this story and expect she will have a grin on her face when she sees it. We have been sharing our house with “Amy” since August 2013 when her memorial was held in Washington, DC by the side of the Potomac River. Someone there asked whether anyone would be going to Lesotho in the near future and we mentioned that yes, we would be going. The next thing we knew, we had a small package of her ashes to lay to rest at Kolonyama High School.

So “Amy” moved into our bedroom in Silver Spring, Maryland for the fall and then boarded the plane with us in December to head to Lesotho via London and Johannesburg. (We know now that we probably should have declared this in some fashion but it was such a small quantity, quite honestly, the thought never crossed our minds.) “She” rented a car with us in Johannesburg and drove with us to Maseru, Leribe and to our house in Ladybrand and was a great topic of discussion at most of the get-togethers we had with family and friends. Quite frankly, “Amy” had quite a nice time!

We finally made it to Kolonyama High School and requested permission to place her ashes in a rock garden flower bed right outside the main office. Ntate Heqoa was fine with this, but wanted us to confirm with the principal that it would be all right. While none of the current staff appeared to have known Amy, they were stunned that this place had meant so much to Amy that she wanted some of her ashes to be placed there. They told us that on the following day, they would have an assembly for all of the students at the school to give them some idea of how Amy felt about Koloyama and Lesotho. They could not have been more gracious.

We did this all in a pouring rain, and took these pictures. Amy, part of you is now at rest at home on the other side of the world, and we had a great time travelling with you!



Pictures from L to R: Amy Friedheim Scholarship recipients with RPCV Don Spicer; Kolonyama HS students Matseliso and Ntsoaki with teacher Ntate Heqoa; Don Spicer puts ashes of RPCV Amy Friedheim to rest at Kolonyama



## Thank you from Ntsoaki and Matseliso for Amy Friedheim Memorial Scholarships

### From Ntsoaki T., Kolonyama High School

*...I am as glad as a blooming tree for the sponsorship that you offered to me. I am very happy because I live with my parents who have no job to pay my school fees and even support the family....*

*The sponsorship even brought the happiness to my family members... I am very happy that now I will fulfill my dreams of furthering my studies as I attend school with ease.*

### From Matseliso M., Kolonyama High School

*I am jotting this brief note to say how jubilant I was to hear the good news from you. I could cover sheets of paper and yet not say half of how I feel...*

*My family seems to be grateful about this. . I simply cannot find words in which to express this to you. I was tongue-tied and could not say a single word to hear about sponsorship. I have spent the night thinking how I ought to thank you....*

*Since my father passed away, my mother was left with nothing and worked hard to pay for my school fees She did not manage to cover my school fees but she found the job as a domestic worker in order for her to try and cover my needs to fulfill her hope of seeing me as someone important in life. You are like an angel sent by God to help his poor servant. May God bless you.*



## Manhood Reconsidered

By **Narin Ratanavade**, Science and Math Teacher, ED 2013, ratanavade@gmail.com (Reprinted from *Khotso*, April 2014)

A 'm'e came up to me and asked, "Are you a Volunteer?"

"Yes," I replied.

"But you are a man?"

"Yes, I am."

Now that was a weird conversation. Because women outnumber men as Volunteers, many Basotho aren't used to seeing guys like me helping out in their communities. In fact, I was told my community had two previous female Peace Corps Volunteers, the last one COS-ing in 2010, which is why I was initially referred to as "Kaitlin's brother," despite the fact that we're not related, don't look like each other, and she's white.

Trying to set a bit of gender equality in motion, I did my own cleaning, cooking, and water transport and would frequently help others. I'll never forget the first time I washed dishes outside my training home. I was apparently hopeless. My 'M'e and *Ausi* would tell me I wasn't scrubbing hard enough, was not using enough soap, was doing the wrong technique, etc. It got so bad that other *Bo-'m'e* came by to watch me clean. They would just hang out in the yard and talk and laugh, most of it probably directed at me. I kept asking if I was washing correctly. They would say yes, nonetheless laughing in my face.

Eventually, I brought those skills I learned and used them at my site, despite my 'M'e cringing at me doing my own laundry and the Basotho neighbors laughing at how I hold my water bucket like a baby as I walked down the hill. And speaking of retrieving water, I do a lot of "girl talk" since I'm hanging out and talking with a bunch of girls at the pump for up to two hours with nothing else to do. It's a rare case when it's boys there retrieving water. I'm so used to girls that I wasn't sure how to act with boys at first! We eventually ended up racing each other to see who could fill the bucket the fastest (yup, I won!). Ah, boys...

My site is unique in that I'm one of only two male adults in the village almost all of the time. The rest of the *bo-ntate* work in South Africa and come back to Lesotho only occasionally. It's very strange when the *bo-ntate* come back home and are shocked to see me, despite me living here for more than a year. Because of so few *bo-ntate*, there are some students that view me as a father figure. In fact, some actually call me father. It's both cute and sometimes annoying, as they talk about their day, their troubles, and how they promise to do better in school.

A surprising thing is how the girls are more comfortable with me in school than the boys. They are more likely to ask and answer question, and come to me after class. They even try to clean my dishes. I refuse this request, and sometimes have students confused at the fact that not only are the dishes being cleaned by a man, but by a teacher (the students clean the dishes for the teachers).

One of the most annoying parts though, is answering questions about who is my wife. Apparently, men aren't supposed to be single, especially a man past his mid-20s. Also, because female Volunteers vastly populate the south (I'm the only male Volunteer in Mohale's Hoek), people assume any foreign-looking woman with me is my wife. I think they're starting to get that men and women can work together without any romantic involvement.

In the end though, it's all good. I'm enjoying showing other Basotho that their previously held notions of "men's roles" are different from what I believe. Now they're used to seeing me doing what are traditionally "women's roles." Many boys and girls are now helping each other, especially in school, where I have one of each gender help me clean the board, demonstrate problems in front of the class, etc. The biggest shocker though? Watching the tears roll down my face as I left my training family, as crying is definitely not what a man should do.



From L-R: Narin Ratanavade; Narin at pump



## Destination

By **Zoe Schroeder**, ED Volunteer 2013, [zoeschroeder@gmail.com](mailto:zoeschroeder@gmail.com) (Excerpted from a longer piece in *Khotso*, April 2014)

Whoever said, “It’s not the destination, but the journey that counts,” clearly has never been on public transport in a developing country. For if they had been, they would know that sometimes arriving at your destination can be the biggest accomplishment you did that day. ....

.....Last week, my friends and I took a trip to Johannesburg to take the GRE exam. This is the entrance exam necessary to apply for many graduate programs in the USA. Amid the stress of studying while working a full time job in a country where “privacy” and “quiet” do not exist, there was also the anxiety that only public transport can induce. Getting there went just fine. The large, clean taxi waiting to go to Joburg over the Lesotho border had a working speedometer, doors that closed correctly and music playing at a level which was reasonable. I watched the South African landscape go by as I listened to my calming music and studied from flashcards. Four hours later, we arrived at our destination with no hassle and the test went well.

The way back, however, was more Lesotho – style. First, upon arrival at the taxi rank, I immediately could identify the taxi going to Lesotho. Men and women wrapped in blankets were waiting in a confused jumble that was supposed to resemble a line to pay their fee. Boxes and bags and buckets filled with every food item imaginable were spread out all over the taxi as the driver played tetris, fitting them all in the vehicle. Eventually, I made it to my seat which did not have enough leg room for my knees, leaving me in a twisted position for the length of the journey. All of the bags, buckets and boxes were piled high in the center of the taxi. Then we sat at the rank for 30 minutes as an argument ensued about whether or not the women with all of the baggage should pay extra. There is *always* an argument about money during these trips. Finally, we set off about an hour later. While waiting to get gas at a station just ten minutes down the road, everyone in the taxi started singing a hymn in Sesotho. Then, just as suddenly, everyone bowed their heads and started praying. Once they finished, as we pulled out and headed towards Lesotho, the party began.

Immediately, wine started to be passed around. The taxi was mostly filled with women and they sang with the *famu* music as it blasted from the speakers. They cried out in joy at every new song and would get up and dance a little two-step with a lot of shoulder movement. I put my earplugs in but could not focus. The party at hand demanded attention. It was loud, drunk and in my face. Although it was irritating, I tried to remember that these people were just excited to go home. With an unemployment rate of 80%, many Basotho have to go to South Africa to find work. They leave everything they have ever known to venture to the big city and do the jobs South Africans do not want to do. Many times, they are treated poorly by their host country which still suffers from deep-seeded racism. Going home, which might happen only once a year, means seeing their families, speaking their language, and eating the food they know and love. It means comfort and familiarity. Having been far from home for so long, I understood their excitement.

However, the party was cut short right before we reached the border. We came upon police who were stopping all traffic to check passports before allowing people to cross. Starting in 2014, the South African government began requiring a visa for any Basotho resident coming to the country for more than seven days. It costs 50 dollars, which is more than most people can afford. The law was meant to limit illegal crossings and make it more difficult for Basotho to take jobs away from South Africans. Without any other options in their own country for employment, many Basotho are forced to bribe the border patrol or swim across the river to get to South Africa. If they are caught, the fine is 100 dollars or jail time. When we were stopped, all twenty-three people on the taxi were told to get off and show passports, which we somehow found amidst all of the luggage. Once checked, those who had the correct visas could get back on. Only nine people did, including myself and my two friends. We drove away from the rest of the riders, many of them sobering up to the fact that they would either be fined or be sent to jail for trying to cross illegally. Either way, they would not see home today.

This turn of events was shocking. It made me sad to see the reality for many people of this country in their desperate attempt to find work. Of course, it reminded me of the problems the USA faces regarding immigration as well. While the journey may be fun or aggravating, the destination is everyone’s goal. It reminded me to be grateful I made it home at all.



### **Likoting Orphan Village**, Qholaqhoe, Butha-Buthe, March, 2014

More than 174 orphans, led by grandmothers *Bo-Nkono Mampho Mokuinihi* and *Mamotloang Mokuinihi*, are nourished by this garden they began planting in 2005. The Qholaqhoe Mountain Connections project provides funding for sustainable food projects, chickens, rabbits, dairy cows. It is a project inspired by RPCV Lynn Minderman, 2007-08 ED Volunteer, Buthe Buthe District, [lminderman@yahoo.com](mailto:lminderman@yahoo.com)

Follow it, with real stories about engaging people, at Website: <http://www.qmconnect.org/> or on Facebook,

**Qholaqhoe Mountain Connections**







## Bits and Pieces

### Passing It On

Photos by Wade Dallagrana

It's hard to take a bunch of teens on *any* field trip, much less one that includes sleeping in rondavels with host families, horseback riding up mountains, school exchanges with Basotho and Zulu kids and serious study of history and issues of southern Africa. So credit Social Studies teacher and RPCV Wade Dallagrana (1977-1979, Ha Elia & Semongkong, Maseru District), for six multiple years of taking students from Edgewood High School in Madison, Wisconsin, to Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and/or Zimbabwe. These photos are from Wade's 2012 trip to South African townships and Lesotho. Wade's e-mail is wdallagrana@hotmail.com



#### Friends of Lesotho - 2014 Treasurer's Summary for Board:

Current Bank Balance (checking 5/17/2014):		\$3,312.20	
Current Bank Balance (savings 5/17/2014):		\$48,292.07	
<b>Total (both accounts)</b>		<b>\$51,604.27</b>	
<b>2014 Extra Donation Fund Status:</b>		Amount sent	Amount Pending
		<u>to Lesotho (1,2)</u>	<u>Future Disbursement</u>
		<u>\$13,004.68</u>	\$24,191.60
<b>(2) Breakout project cash sent</b> (all fees under Operating):		<u>\$13,004.68</u>	
Rotary Club Maseru - Friedheim Scholarships	1/22/2014	\$1,450.00	
Little Angels Wire	3/12/2014	\$4,785.50	
ck2234 Wittenberg Univ - via Scott Rosenberg	4/23/2014	\$6,769.18	
<b>2014 Operating Expense Status:</b>			
	Unused Expenses in 2014 Budget	\$5,207.56	
(Total operating cash expenses, incl. NPCA pass thru):		\$385.44	
(Total operating inkind expenses to date):		\$20.01	



## Bits and Pieces

### Want to Mentor a Returning Volunteer?

Lesotho Peace Corps Country Director Wendy Vandamme and FOL President Scott Rosenberg have initiated a mentoring program for Volunteers completing their service who have specific career interests. Currently fifteen Close of Service (COS)-ing Volunteers are seeking to be matched with RPCVs as mentors in such areas as nursing and public health, international development, law, journalism, agriculture, engineering and finance. If you are interested in reaching out to help a transitioning Volunteer, please contact Scott Rosenberg by e-mail, [Scott.Rosenberg@friendsoflesotho.org](mailto:Scott.Rosenberg@friendsoflesotho.org), with information concerning your geographic region, career specialties, and ideas for connecting with a "new" RPCV.



### Sehlabathebe Becomes UNESCO World Heritage Site

In 2013, the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed Lesotho's Sehlabathebe National Park as an extension to the uKhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site in South Africa. The new name for the combined parks is now the Maloti Drakensberg Transboundary World Heritage Site. This is Lesotho's first World Heritage Site. U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers in Lesotho began supporting the development of Sehlabathebe National Park when the park was established in 1970.

In addition to its 250 endemic plant species, Sehlabathebe also features important rock paintings made by the San people who lived on the site for 4 000 years.

A second historical area with spectacular vistas, the Thaba-Bosiu National Monument, is also under review this year as a potential World Heritage Site. It was on this plateau that Moshoeshe effectively defended his people from attacks by Batlokoa, Shaka Zulu soldiers and Afrikaners. Basotho pride themselves that they were never conquered by any nation because of the protection afforded by this plateau. It was on Thaba-Bosiu that Moshoeshe negotiated and signed treaties with the British, including the one which established the country's current boundaries. Christianity in Lesotho started on Thaba-Bosiu with the establishment of the first Mission Station below it.

Thanks to Kevin Freer, RPCV 1976-1978, Mashai Ha Teko, Thaba Tseka District, for this submission and to [Media uKhahlamba / Drakensberg Park \(UNESCO/NHK\)](#). Learn more about Lesotho's World Heritage Sites at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/985>



Photo by Andrew Steele

## THANKS!!

Thanks to contributors to this newsletter:

Barbara Brown, Dave Byron, Kevin Freer, Eric Goldman, Heartland Film, John Hollister, Ella Kwisnek, Erica Moroney, Andrew Mudge, Lynn Minderman, Narin Ratanavade, Lebohang Ranooe, Richard Rowan, Zoe Schroeder, Greg Sorvig, Don Spicer, Zach Rosen, Scott Rosenberg, Anri Tanabe

**Newsletters Past and Present**—The FOL Newsletter, *Metsoalle ea Lesotho* is posted on our website homepage (<http://friendsoflesotho.org>) under Recent News each quarter of the year. The complete set of newsletters is available on our website from Issue Number One, Summer, 1987 to the present. Go to Membership->Newsletters for the archives.

**Peace Corps Lesotho in-country *Khotso* Newsletters are also available on our website.** *Khotso* is the official monthly newsletter published by Peace Corps Lesotho and distributed to current Peace Corps Volunteers. Read it and be prepared for some nostalgic memories and a unique reconnection with your own experiences in Lesotho.

**Submit Newsletter Articles**—Do you know a great website? Have you given a talk about Lesotho? Have an opinion, blog, or want to write a column? Have you visited Lesotho recently? Do you have photos from Lesotho to share?

Submit articles, photos, or information of interest to our members to:

Madeline Uranek, FOL Newsletter Coordinator ([globalmaddy@gmail.com](mailto:globalmaddy@gmail.com)) or send hard copies to her at 2995 Gannon Street, Madison WI 53711, USA



# FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

Making a difference at the grassroots level

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Yrs in Lesotho: \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_: \*District: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Village: \_\_\_\_\_

CHED  ED Project(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Newsletters will be sent by e-mail as part of FOL's "GO GREEN" effort. If you prefer postal service, check here .**

FOL's Website Member Directory is accessible to members only by use of a secure ID and Password. The fields marked above with an \* will be included in the directory. Check here if you do not want to be listed .

**Privacy Policy:** FOL will not release member information to any organization, except the National Peace Corps Association, upon implied consent when a member joins both FOL and NPCA. FOL will share membership information with other FOL members and prospective PCVs seeking information about Lesotho.

Friends of Lesotho (FOL) is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. A copy of the current financial statement of Friends of Lesotho is available by writing 4110 Denfeld Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895, or by emailing [treas@friendsoflesotho.org](mailto:treas@friendsoflesotho.org). Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401, (410) 974-5534.

*FOL is affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). \* If 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 the credit for dues.*

## Membership Form

Complimentary--PCVs during service up to 12 months after COS.

### Dues Are Per Person

Annual Membership--\$15 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Lifetime Membership Options

- Basic--\$250 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Bronze--\$500 \$ \_\_\_\_\_\*\*
- Silver--\$750 \$ \_\_\_\_\_\*\*
- Gold--\$1,000 \$ \_\_\_\_\_\*\*

**\*\*Payable in annual installments of \$250**

Additional Donation to FOL \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for:

- Greatest Need (default option)
- Tuition Assistance Programs
- Memorial Scholarships Fund *In memory of:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Yrs \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Dist/Village/Job \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL to FOL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NPCA Membership--\$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*FOL will forward to NPCA for you.*

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your check and completed form to Friends of Lesotho at the address above or pay by credit card by Clicking on Join/Renew from our website at [www.friendsoflesotho.org](http://www.friendsoflesotho.org) and select JustGive or Razoo.

For FOL use only. Please do not complete the information below.

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

Renew Date \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Members \_\_\_\_\_ NPCA \_\_\_\_\_ **11/01/2010**





## FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

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## METSOALLE ea LESOTHO

Second Quarter 2014  
Newsletter



FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

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