

FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

METSOALLE EA LESOTHO

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(301) 589-4236 ■ Editor: George Fanelli

Summer 1995

The Winds of Change

There have been several important political issues and changes which have occurred in Lesotho since the last issue of the newsletter.

The most interesting and significant change is the reinstatement of Moshoeshoe II and the abdication of Letsie III as King of Lesotho in January 1995. A ceremony with an estimated crowd of 30,000 spectators, including Presidents Masire and Mugabe and various other foreign dignitaries witnessed the event.

The basis for the change was Act #10 of 1994, The Office of King (Reinstatement of Former King) Bill, enacted in December 1994.

It appears that the bill had been introduced as part of the brokered settlement of the August 1994 coup, when the government of B.C.P. Prime Minister Mokhehle was displaced by members of the rival B.N.P. (see the last issue of the newsletter for additional details about the coup itself).

Moshoeshoe II had been removed from office by the former military government and went into a two (2) year exile. He returned to Lesotho in 1992 (see the Summer 1994 issue for additional details), allegedly supported by the B.N.P.

His restoration is not without controversy. There has already been a suit filed in the Lesotho High Court by attorney Thabang Khauoe to declare Act #10 of 1994 null, void and unconstitutional. Arguments were scheduled to be heard on the 6th of March 1995 but the Court's answer is unknown at this time. Additionally, it had been reported that supporters of Prime Minister Mokhehle were not in favor of the restoration.

Second on the list of important political changes is the breakup of the Basotho National Party into two (2) factions. The breakup itself became public in February 1995 but there have been some reports that infighting between the supporters of newly elected leader E.R. Sekhonyana and Deputy Leader P.N. Peete began as early as 1991.

Shortly after the split of the B.N.P. became public, Prime Minister Mokhehle announced he was reorganizing his cabinet. Several of his ministers have been given less prestigious positions in what could be interpreted as demotions or, in a more Machiavellian vein, the prevention of any minister securing his own constituency. Nevertheless, what is most in-

teresting is the appointment of Motsoahae Thabane as the Prime Minister's special advisor. Mr. Thabane had last been in government during the Lekhanya military junta. He was one of two (2) special advisors to Major-General Lekhanya, the other being none other than the current leader of the B.N.P., E. R. Sekhonyana. He went into exile in South Africa when Lekhanya's government was overthrown in 1991. It is believed by some supporters of the B.N.P. that Mr. Thabane will actually advise Prime Minister Mokhehle to appoint Mr. Sekhonyana to his government. Hopefully, we will hear more about these developments and report them in the next issue. ■

New Ambassador Nominated and Confirmed

Mr. Bismark Myrick, formerly Consul General to South Africa, was nominated in December 1994 as the new Ambassador-designate to Lesotho.

Mr. Myrick has a great deal of prior experience in Africa, having served in various capacities in South Africa, Liberia and Ethiopia. Mr. Myrick, a member of the Senior Foreign Service, advocates advancing U.S. interests by continuing to support democracy and economic development in Lesotho with an open dialogue between the government and all elements of Basotho society. ■

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

The response of FOL members to the plea for time and money I made in the previous issue of the newsletter was encouraging. A few members have expressed an interest in joining the Board and we are trying to work out the details—what projects they might take on and how to conduct meetings, distribute information, etc. Hopefully, I can report on these new Board members in the the next newsletter. Again, if any one out there is interested in serving on or assisting the Board please do not hesitate to give me a call.

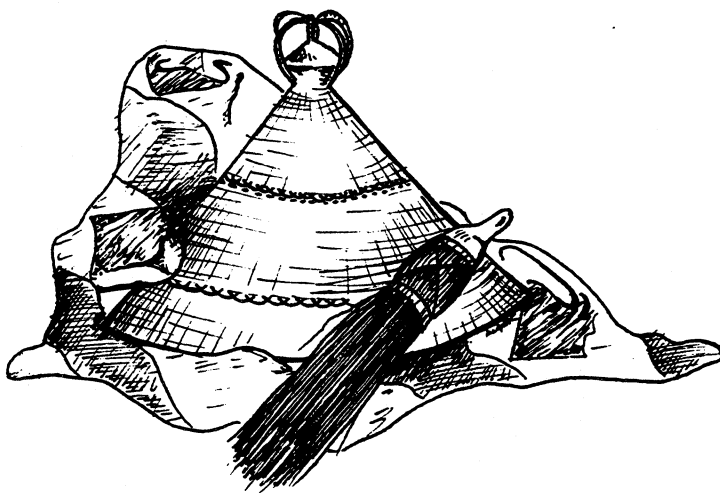
Quite a few members also sent in a little extra with their membership dues and this will help towards meeting some of FOL's commitments to the scholarship fund, Trickle-Up, the volunteer liaison committee, and the national museum. Since we heard very little from members about the groups and programs we are supporting, we can only presume you approve of these efforts and we will continue our support of these projects.

At this time, the Board is putting together a separate fund raising appeal which we hope to get out to you over the summer. The appeal will provide information on the projects to which we currently send donations and will hopefully include some specifics about those receiving scholarship funds. The Board wants to make it clear that in order to continue to donate, we will need your continuing support.

As you are all well aware, continuation of foreign aid to many areas of the world is a hot topic in Washington. The level of development aid provided to Africa is being closely scrutinized and numerous cuts have been proposed. Although FOL's efforts are small, any assistance you can offer might help bridge some of the gap. So look for a letter from us in the near future—and thanks in advance for your overwhelming response!



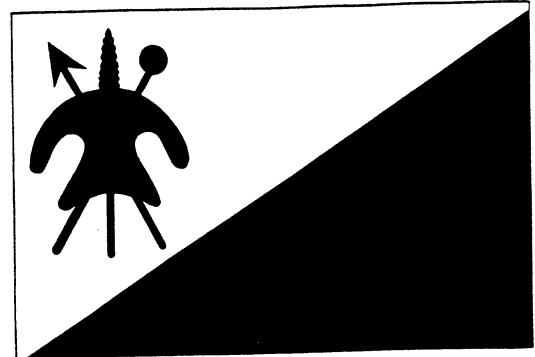
Don Spicer



NOTES FROM LESOTHO

THE LESOTHO FLAG

I know it does not do justice (no colors, not the right size, etc.) but I copied a picture of the new Lesotho flag—I guess this means my old tie with the white Basotho hats on the blue background has to go.



The new Lesotho flag is based on the traditional motto of the Basotho nation:

KHOTSO PULA NALA

the white symbolizes *Khotso* (peace), the blue *Pula* (rain) and the green *Nala* (prosperity). White occupies the top triangular half with diagonal traversing from left to bottom corner adjoining the hoist. White blue and green each occupy half the surface area of the lower triangle. The light brown shield on the white half of the flag is supported by an assegai (left) and a knobkerrie (right). A plumed spine (center) symbolizes the Basotho's traditional safeguards for peace.

YOUR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE

The Peace Corps Gifts in Kind Program in their March 1995 Volunteer Project Needs publication listed a request from Dave Bickel. Dave is an instructor at the Leloaleng Trade School in Quthing and has requested a set of Encyclopedias (\$679) for the school library. If you would like additional information about Dave's request, or any PCV's request, please contact Alexandra Willson or Taylor Houck at the Gifts in Kind office. You can reach them at 1-800-424-8580, ext. 2227 or (202) 606-3360.

Please keep in mind you do not have to fund Dave's or any PCV's request completely. Any donation you make will be greatly appreciated and, of course, is tax deductible. *(continued on page 4)*

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

“How the Weather Was”

This issue of our newsletter has been much more enjoyable to edit than the recent issues I have worked on. Hopefully, as you go through it you will also notice the lack of articles on political upheaval and more of a focus on development concerns.

This is a function of two (2) variables. The first and most important being that things have calmed down in Lesotho and the government, currently, can concentrate on national policy. The second variable is the volume and diversity of information you all are submitting.

The information which generally comes my way directly is from major news organizations and it tends to be published when it reflects some sort of conflict or political unrest. However, we have received several magazine and newspaper articles on things such as business development and new construction occurring in Lesotho. Personally, I find it much more interesting, entertaining and less morbid. I hope it is also more to your liking.

Also, it seems we are being drawn into the “web.” I think you will find some interesting news and suggestions regarding this issue. Of course, if you are like me and have sort of been dragged kicking and screaming into the computer age,

you do not now possess a modem from which you can access all of this information. I appreciate any information you do come across to be sent either to me directly or to Don Spicer, who will forward it on.

One of the sources used for articles in the newsletter is the Lesotho Mirror. I generally have approximately 15 copies of the paper for each newsletter. Once I have gone through them they end up in my recycling basket, possibly to be turned into the Enquirer. If anyone would like to see these back issues, let me know and I will forward them.

I would like to mention something about donations made to FOL. Recently, a very generous financial gift was made to FOL with instructions on how the money was to be distributed. Unfortunately, since one of the organizations specified was not on the Board approved list of groups, charities, etc. to which FOL donates funds, the check was returned for additional instructions. It would be easier if you wish to make such a donation that you specify the types of recipient organizations, rather than individual ones.


George Fanelli

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Surfing the Internet

Janet Tomkins, in her cover letter, sent along with her annual membership dues (just a reminder if you have not sent in your membership dues yet) asked, "... members have access to the internet . . . perhaps it might be possible to establish a bulletin board or Listserv for people with an interest in Lesotho?

Since you asked, Janet, FOL has received the following tidbits of information about surfing the internet.

Ted Houchstadt has found two (2) reliable sources of information which I am sort of just going to repeat verbatim because I really do not get most of this.

The ANC apparently has a "Gopher" service (a rhetorical question—why not a "Mole" service?) which includes daily news briefings from the ANC, SAPA and SABC. It can be accessed at: gopher://wn.apc.org/llanc

The other source of information is the African Studies Program World Wide Web Server at U. of Penn. which can be accessed by a "WWW Browser" (e.g., Mosaic, Cello, Lynx) using the following "URI," :http://www.african.upenn.edu/African_Studies/AS.html

It can also be accessed via Telnet at: www.upenn.edu — enter "pennweb" at the login prompt - select "WWW" Servers at Penn's homepage and then "African Studies at Penn"

To directly access Lesotho information via Penn's WWW Browser use the following "URL":

http://www.african.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Country_Specific/Lesotho.html

Ted's e-mail address is: ted.hochstadt@hq.doe.gov

The National Peace Corps Association has provided the following ideas of interest to all of us:

1) A World Wide Web page with information about the PC and includes an RPCV database. The address is: <http://www.intac.com//>.

You need a direct link to the Internet with Mosaic software or use a text based browser such as Lynxx. For more information send an e-mail message to: mjh@intac.com.

2) A discussion list or listserv for returned, current or potential PCV's, created by a former PCV, Elliott Parker at PCORP-L-request@CMUVM.CSU

In the body of the text type "SUBscribe PCORPS-L (your real name)"

These electronic networks operate independently of the NPCA. You can reach a member of the NPCA at the following addresses:

David_Arnold@csgi.com

CherylBartz@csgi.com

Susan_Ueberhorst@csgi.com

Notes from Lesotho continued from page 2

NEW DEVELOPMENTS (the construction kind) IN LESOTHO

There are a slew of projects now under construction in all parts of Lesotho.

The Republic of South Africa and Lesotho had agreed in August 1992 to construct a new **Maseru Border Bridge**. Construction started in May 1994 and the bridge is scheduled to be finished in May/June 1995. The new bridge will allow for two way traffic (the current bridge for those who remember had only one lane and could not handle any pedestrian traffic). The old border bridge will not be torn down but will continue to serve rail traffic. The estimated construction cost is M12.5 million.

The new **Kingsway Mall** project also started construction in 1994. It is scheduled for completion in August 1995. A number of local subcontractors are employed on the project and approximately 100 jobs have been created. This project consists of four (4) linked seven (7) story buildings. It is a mixed commercial and office project with a total development cost of M49 million.

The first phase of the **Highlands Water Project** has been under construction since February 1991 and is scheduled to be completed sometime in 1996. Ultimately, the Water Project is

scheduled to be completed in four (4) phases over a 30 year period. Currently, this is the world's largest water scheme project under construction.

The major aspects of this first phase of the Project are the construction of the Katse dam, two (2) hydro electric power stations, access roads and a water delivery system.

The Katse dam is an enormous project in its own right and below are some of the number (the conversion factor for those who want to know is: 1 meter = 1.094 yards).

The width of the dam at its base is 60 meters and at its crest is 9 meters. The length of the crest is 710 meters and the height is 185 meters. What makes this project all the more remarkable is the site for the dam is 3,000 meters above sea level.

The on-site temperature extremes also make this an extraordinary construction project. I had difficulty in adapting to the warm days and cold nights in Lesotho (apparently the addition of alcohol really does not improve one's adaptability). The concrete used for the dam also has difficulty in setting with temperatures ranging from -10° C to 25° C during a single 24 hour period.

One long range projected benefit of the Water Project is the protection and commercialization of the fishing industry in Lesotho. Other planned benefits are electrical self sufficiency, continuous injection of capital into the country and, hopefully, better roads, infrastructure and environmental conservation (they are not necessarily a contradiction in terms). ■



MEMBERSHIP FORM

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 \$ _____
 (\$20 for individual or \$27.50 for family - see note 1 below)

 PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR THE FOL DIRECTORY

NAME: _____ YEARS IN LESOTHO:
 Peace Corps: 19__ to 19__
 FAMILY MEMBERS: _____ Other: _____ 19__ to 19__
 _____ Village: _____
 _____ District: _____
 _____ Work Program: _____
 MAILING ADDRESS: _____ HOME PHONE: (____) _____
 _____ WORK PHONE: (____) _____

CURRENT OCCUPATION/EMPLOYER: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO HELP FRIENDS OF LESOTHO WITH:

- _____ Developing the newsletter.
- _____ Serving on the Board of Directors or assisting the Board.
- _____ Supporting a scholarship fund for Basotho students.
- _____ Other (Please specify): _____

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Friends of Lesotho (FOL) is now affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). If you have included NPCA dues in your payment, we will forward them to the 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 the affiliated group to receive the dues.
2. If you do not want your name released to any of the organizations listed below, please check the appropriate space:
 - _____ 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 _____
 Renew Date _____ Expires _____ # of Members _____ NPCA _____

MEMBERS NEWS

LATE BUT GREAT PERFORMANCE

We received notice from Erik Vidstrand & Ben Bloom about a Peace Corps Film Festival to be held in Austin, Texas in August 1995. Unfortunately, the deadline for submission of any films for the festival was May 15th (mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa). The Gulf Coast Council of RPCV's is coordinating this festival and there was some information they would like to include in the newsletter about eligibility, themes, film formats, etc., etc. Since I missed the deadline I will provide you with the phone number and address and you may contact them directly and see if it is still possible to submit an entry or any information about future festivals. Please write to:

Erick Vidstrand
10722 Holly Springs
Houston, Texas 77042

or call Erik @ (713) 528-1487 or Ben @ (713) 463-1292

Should anyone see Ed Fogarty at the festival, please tell him to contact me.



Finally, if you do not already know: **if you are an employee of the federal government, your PC service can be credited toward Federal Employee Retirement Service (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement Service (CSRS) benefits.** The amount due is based upon the

post-service readjustment allowance (three percent for FERS, seven percent for CSRS). Current of former federal employees should contact their agency's personnel office to learn how to gain these benefits under 1993 Public Law 108-02.



NEWS FROM *THE CONSTITUENT*

The NPCA, through its advocacy network, the Constituency for Sustainable Development, publishes a newsletter called "*The Constituent*" which includes a great deal of recent and important news for PCV's. The recent May issue of *The Constituent* covered the developments in Washington on the foreign aid appropriations proposals, and from the looks of it, tough times are ahead. There have been stories in the national press on some of the proposals but the story in *The Constituent* indicated the Peace Corps could be slated for something along the lines of a 20% to 40% hit. Obviously, it is time to write to your Representatives and Senators. And writing does make a difference.

In a related story in *The Constituent*, Senator Mitch McConnell (R.-KY), earned much deserved kudos for not only dropping a proposal in January '95 to put the Peace Corps in the State Department but, additionally, he proposed an amendment to the budget resolution to increase foreign aid by \$1 billion. Senator McConnell had received numerous letters (in response to a prior story reported in *The Constituent*) after he first aired his proposal for melding the PC into the State Department. If you want any information about *The Constituent* or any of the articles in it, please let me know.

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