



# FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

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# METSOALLE EA LESOTHO

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2801 Spencer Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
(301) 589-4236 ■ Editor: Lisa Labella Mitchell

February 1994

## Lesotho Dignitaries Visit U.S.

**O**n Monday, September 27, 1993 Don Spicer, President of FOL, met with the Honorable Selometsi Baholo who is the Deputy Prime Minister of Lesotho as well as its Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. Ntate Baholo was in the United States on government business and asked Ambassador Kitleli to arrange the meeting. Ntate Baholo had heard of Friends of Lesotho but requested further information about the group. He asked for a summary of the group and its activities which could be shared with the Prime Minister and cabinet in Lesotho. The Board will ensure such a summary is prepared and forwarded to the embassy.

The meeting lasted about an hour and a number of issues were discussed. Ntate Baholo first wished to express his regrets that the Prime Minister would be unable to come to the

*Continued on page 6*

## NGOs in Southern Africa

**I**n a recent article about Southern African NGOs, Ntate Sehoai Santho, the vice president of FAVDO (Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations) and the head of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations described the role and potential impact of NGOs in Lesotho and Southern Africa. Santho stressed the need for NGOs to remain independent, accountable and responsive to their members' concerns while working closely with govern-

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*C. Payne Lewis of Africare, Hon. Molapo Qhobela and Ambassador Kitleli.*

## Foreign Minister Meets with PVOs

**T**he success of the March elections in Lesotho was on everyone's minds at the recent meeting between Mr. Molapo Qhobela, the Foreign Minister of Lesotho, and a group of PVO representatives. The meeting was sponsored by Africare, FOL and Inter-Action's Africa Liaison Project. Mr. Qhobela spoke positively about the collective efforts of both national entities and the international community in ensuring that the elections were both free and fair.

On other topics, Mr. Qhobela spoke of the strengthening relationship with South Africa and the "flourishing of NGOs and the private sector." The areas of agriculture, health and education were cited as Lesotho's development priorities.

The PVO representatives at the meeting expressed great interest in initiating or expanding development activities in Lesotho, especially in the areas of small scale rural enterprise, primary health care, agriculture and capacity building of local NGOs. The work of FOL, The Africa Development Fund (ADF), the Peace Corps, the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law and other organizations were mentioned specifically, and the umbrella organization of the Lesotho Council on NGOs was suggested as an excellent resource for PVOs interested in working in Lesotho.

*(Information from Monday Developments, Nov. 8, 1993, page 4)*

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

**A**s we enter the new year, FOL finds itself struggling for direction, membership input and "person power." The newsletter suffers constant delays as we all try to struggle jobs, families, and an overload of commitments and it becomes harder and harder to maintain momentum for the work we all hope to do.

There is a lot of hopeful, positive change in the air for FOL...the new, democratically chosen government in Lesotho which acknowledges and encourages our existence, an active and communicative embassy in Washington, DC, a possibility of connecting our work to that of other NGOs in Lesotho, and possibility of continued change and opportunity in Lesotho as the transition in South Africa occurs. There is a tremendous need and appreciation for the grassroots work we do, and the Board has developed several strong and productive working relationships with people who share our goals. There is much to be done.

The idea of moving toward some small-scale fund-raising to support specific goals has been raised often, but this would require active participation and input from the membership. How so people feel about this? What are your feelings about the work that is being done? What more are you willing/able to contribute in terms of time, ideas, energy and fund-raising? What kind of fund-raising ideas do you think we should consider? How could/should it be administered? All of these questions that need to be addressed in the coming year as FOL considers its scope and potential. Please offer your ideas and time to the Board and let us know what you want to see.

It is with true regret (and a bit of relief) that I inform the membership that this will be the last newsletter I will be responsible for. My commitments to family, a new graduate program (Peace Corps/USA Fellow, Secondary Special Ed., George Washington University) and a fledging teaching career have made it impossible to take on any more. I hope to contribute regularly to the newsletter production and remain active on the Board, but it is time for me to pass the baton. I don't know who is next in line...please contact Don Spicer or Scott Brumburgh if you are interested. And please continue to contribute letters, articles, information and ideas.

In the past several newsletters, I have failed to acknowledge the fine work of Candy Rogers of Alexandria, Virginia who has been responsible for the layout and design of the newsletter. Although she has never been to Lesotho, she is interested in the work we do and has been generous and dedicated to the production of this newsletter. To her, I offer many thanks for her contribution to past, present, and future issues of the FOL newsletter.

Salang ka khotso kaofela,

Lisa Labella

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *10-Year Reunion Reminder*

RPCV's, PC staff, and trainers who participated in the December 1981-February 1982 training program in Roma, Lesotho and/or in the Lesotho CAST held in Capahosic, Virginia during the week of November 1st, 1981, are invited to the first official 10-year reunion of this distinguished group. Bill Boeddiker (Roma, 1981/1983) has agreed to organize the event but needs your help in getting the ball rolling. If you have any suggestions on where, i.e. east or west coast, the reunion should be held or during what season, please contact Bill as soon as possible. Bill can be reached at (415) 775-1847. You can also write to him at 1683 Hayes Street; San Francisco, California 94117. You should know that Bill is already pushing for Easter Weekend, 1994, in San Francisco, for obvious reasons.

### FOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Lesotho Arts and Crafts Festival

**F**OL has received information from Delton Allen about the Lesotho Arts and Crafts Festival which was held on November 6-9, 1992 in Maseru. One major goal of the festival was to promote Lesotho's arts and crafts. The handicrafts and artwork displayed included pottery, jewelry, sewing, knitting, carpentry, leather work and tapestry. Approximately 2,000 people attended the festival and it was generally perceived as a success, in spite of inclement weather. Sales and attendance were fairly good, a sense of cooperation existed between the organizers, private businesses, NGO's and

the government, and a heightened awareness of Lesotho's cultural richness and potential seemed to prevail.

Several recommendations have been made about the organization, staffing, financing, publicity and execution of future festivals and an executive report was made available to FOL by Delton, who was the coordinator of the November 1992 event. Stay tuned for more information on future Lesotho festivals.

## Clothing and Book Donations To Be Funded

**T**he FOL board of directors is working out the details of a program by which members would receive reimbursement for shipping needed clothing to remote Lesotho villages and books to school and other libraries. Key to the program are reliable coordinators at the receiving end in Lesotho and here in the U.S. Because of the efforts of Delton M. Allen, a development professional and former PCV living in Lesotho over fifteen years, coordinators have been identified. Delton, who most recently worked for PC/Lesotho and the Lesotho Council of NGOs, will be the coordinator in Lesotho. A close relative of his, Mrs. Helen Cullen of Keyser, WV, will be the coordinator in the U.S.

As currently envisioned in a set of guidelines written by FOL board member Scott Brumburgh and Delton, lists of specific clothing and book requirements will be sent to FOL by Delton and publicized in flyers and our newsletter. Members wishing to respond with donations will contact Mrs.

Cullen who will forward guidelines for preparing the shipment. Members will pre-pay shipment to Lesotho and send their receipt to FOL, which will immediately reimburse the member. Delton will write FOL to acknowledge receipt and distribution details in Lesotho for announcement in our newsletter.

Because of the anticipated volume of contributions — as many as six cartons are already prepared due to word-of-mouth discussion about the project — the FOL board has decided special fund-raising efforts will be needed to support the program. The project is an outgrowth of an earlier effort to send medical textbooks to rural clinics in Lesotho which was not sustained for lack of a coordinator in Lesotho. FOL member Bob Edgar encouraged the organization in 1992 to try again because of his knowledge of successful donation programs elsewhere in Africa. The current effort was developed during home-leave by Delton this past summer.

## **FOL Project Update** by Don Spicer

One of the problems that FOL has experienced in its attempts to direct resources to worthy projects in Lesotho has been the lack of any reliable, on-site group presence to review potential projects, evaluate their needs, and to provide information on how FOL resources committed to a specific project were spent. While both the Peace Corps office in Maseru and the office of the Lesotho Council of NonGovernmental Organizations have assisted FOL from time to time, the Board has always hoped to find a member of FOL to serve in this capacity in Lesotho. To our good fortune, Jody Retzer a Lesotho RPCV who joined FOL in 1993 offered to serve in this capacity as she planned to return to Lesotho for a year or so beginning in September 1993.

In conversations and letters with Jody prior to her departure, I outlined some of the information we needed. By the end of September, two weeks after her arrival, Jody had managed to meet with most of the groups with which we are involved and provided the Board with an excellent report on these groups and an assessment of whether we should continue or modify our support. The Board cannot thank Jody enough for the efforts she has made, and hopes to establish some long range links while she is there. A summary of what she reported follows:

### **VOLUNTEER LIAISON COMMITTEE SMALL PROJECT FUND**

FOL has contributed a total of \$1,000 to this fund since 1991, a total of M2,721.40. The volunteers administering it approved funding of a) M715 for the Women in Development Calendar which has been written about in previous newsletters, b) M300 for a project at a volunteer's school in Qacha's Nek to build a cement floor in one of the school's classrooms, c) M690 for supplies for a School Self Reliance Project involving winter gardening at a school in Mohale's Hoek, and d) M750 for a computer course for a Masotho working with a volunteer in water development and horizontal well drilling.

After deducting some bank charges, the fund has about M250 remaining. The Board is satisfied that FOL resources are being used as intended and will make an additional contribution of \$250 in 1993. (Any further involvement with the WID calendar will be handled as a separate issues.



### **CENTRE FOR HOPE**

Jody has been able to speak with the director of the centre (Elizabeth Marekimane) but has not yet been able to meet with her. However, I have been in correspondence with her

and have been pleased with her forthright response to our inquiries. FOL has donated \$550 since 1992 to the centre, all of which has gone to meet the needs of the children. However, Ms. Marekimane recently wrote that she was having some problems with the principal of the school and questioned his commitment to the project. For that reason, she is asking all donors to suspend their contributions until she herself can be assured that future donations will continue to be spent appropriately. FOL will of course honor her request and has sent a letter to her thanking her for the honest assessment of the situation. (By the way, FOL does have a VCR tape about this project which we would be happy to send to anyone interested in viewing it.)



### **UN STAFF EDUCATION FUND**

FOL has contributed \$2,000 to this fund since 1992 to assist 4 students with their tuition. This was reported on in a previous newsletter. While the Board did receive reports from the students after the first year that warranted continued funding, the Board has not yet received any reports for the current year. Numerous letters have been sent with no reply. Fortunately, Jody was able to meet with the new contact for the fund, Mr. Richard Dictus who recently replaced our original contact. Jody reports that Mr. Dictus is concerned about the fund and whether it was being adequately monitored. He is attempting to get current reports on the students being funded by FOL but did not seem optimistic that he would hear anything. He has set up a work group to evaluate the whole process and to recommend whether the UN office should continue to try to administer this type of activity.

At present, there does not seem to be any avenue for FOL to continue its scholarship efforts through the UN and in fact Jody recommended we not continue unless we see positive results from the work group. Jody, as well as other FOL members, has suggested we try to work through the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) run by Peace Corps Volunteers and the Board will be exploring this as the vehicle for its scholarship assistance. While the Board is disappointed that the UN connection seems to be broken, it is encouraged that the money donated by FOL did assist the students it was meant to assist, and looks forward to continuing its efforts in this area through TAP.

### **BOITEKO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

FOL gave \$300 to this organization in 1992, and Jody was able to meet with the acting General Secretary of the Association, 'Me' Amelia Majoro, the same individual to whom

## FOL Project Update

the donation was given in 1992. Jody described some concerns about being able to distinguish between those projects which are clearly the Association's and those that belong directly to 'Me' Majoro, who is involved in her own endeavors towards self-sufficiency (milk cows, a bio-gas system rigged up to provide gas from manure to run a cooking burner, a candle making project, a school uniform sewing project, and egg production). Jody recommended that any continued involvement with the Association be directed clearly towards group projects and the Association's regional and annual meetings. This was the stipulation put on the original grant and based on previous correspondence from 'Me' Majoro was how the money was used.

The Board will continue to evaluate this organization but does not intend to provide any resources in 1994.

As you can see, Jody put in a lot of effort for us and has indicated her willingness to continue in this regard. As you can also see, donating separately to a variety of organizations is a little hard to keep track of, particularly with our limited resources. The Board is seriously considering other ways in which to manage their project donations, particularly in light of the more recent contacts the Board has made with other PVO/NGO's involved and interested in Lesotho. The Board is leaning toward's finding one organization working in Lesotho which is involved in a variety of projects to which FOL could send its contribution to be disbursed as that organization saw fit. Of course, reports on results would be a condition of any donations. While no such organization has yet been identified, proceeding in this fashion would ease the administrative burden on the Board and ensure that the FOL funds were used for the desired purpose.

This is basically where we stand right now. We continue to try to direct as much as we can to Lesotho and are of course always open to any suggestions or offers of assistance from our membership.

### SUMMARY OF TRICKLE-UP PROGRAM

A summary of the Trickle-Up (TUP) program is provided below. It comes from discussions that Wade Dallagrana, an FOL member who volunteered to serve as our contact person with TUP, had with Daniel Delehanty, TUP's Program Officer for Africa, in August of this year and a meeting Don Spicer had with Dan at a TUP reception on September 29th.

#### 1. Information from Wade on his discussions with Dan:

- A fruit and vegetable project which was initiated in 1992 is at a standstill because the UN volunteer that is coordinating the activity has not been in contact with Dan;

- Difficulties continue to exist finding coordinating agencies/personnel to take on the identification and follow-through on the projects;
- A \$50 grant from FOL was sent to Planned Parenthood in Lesotho to start a business but has not yet been cashed and no response has yet been received upon further inquiry;
- An application from a group of 5 Basotho who want to sell peaches has been received, approved, and funded through FOL donation (copy attached);
- TUP has also funded groups in the Maseru area that are involved in selling ice cream, popcorn, and maize. All of these have been funded with FOL money;
- There are two active coordinators in Lesotho, Mr. Tajul Islam Majumder at U.N.D.P. and Ms. Elsie Molupe of the District Agricultural Office;
- Based on his conversation, Wade recommends continued funding.

#### 2. Don Spicer attended a TUP reception held in Washington D.C. on September 29, 1993. While it concerned all of their Programs, Don was able to talk to Dan about TUP in Lesotho and also meet Mildred and Glen Leet, the founders of TUP:

- From 1979 through December 1992, TUP has started 179 businesses in Lesotho with a total of 1,433 entrepreneurs, 92% of whom are female;
- In 1992, 6 businesses were started with a total of 30 entrepreneurs, 87% of whom are female. Average sales were \$303 and average profits were \$60.
- Dan explained that they continue to have difficulty in finding coordinators but that the two mentioned above seem stable and committed to the program. Mr. Majumder had previous experience running TUP programs in Bangladesh;
- He is budgeting for 10 to 15 new business for their next planning period and still feels that Lesotho is an excellent environment in which to establish a solid program;
- The funding provided to Planned Parenthood mentioned above was not for a business involved in the Planned Parenthood program, but one that Planned Parenthood came into contact with as part of their work. Dan would try to get the details of the business once he hears from them;
- Dan will continue to send information to us about the businesses being started and hoped we would be able to continue our funding;

Based on my discussions with him and the Leets, Don too recommends continued funding for 1993 at either the \$500 or \$750 level.

## Letter from A.D. Lebona, Lesotho citizen, to Peace Corps Director

November 23, 1993

Dear Mr. Russell,

As the year 1993 draws to a close, permit me to take this opportunity to wish the Peace Corps in Lesotho a well deserved and blessed Christmas and New Year, rich with fulfilled expectations and successful plans .

Speaking as an ordinary Mosotho, I am moved with gratitude to add my own appreciation for the generosity, humanity, courage, determination, good will and sacrifice which are the significance of the American presence in our land, Lesotho. Yes, indeed there has been the occasional disappointment – but alas to err is human.

I do recall the arrival of the pioneers soon after Lesotho's independence (1967). I too was among the many Basotho assembled on the "wild grass tarmac" to the shouting, praises and songs - to welcome the honoured visitors as the ancient and battered Dakota D.C.3 touched down on the Mountain Kingdom.

It was an enthralling sight to behold the first contingent of men and women from the sophisticated and powerful United States of America. To see at close range, people from New York, Washington, California, you name it, was an experience rich with emotion. This was reality, not a movie.

The welcome thrills, shrills and yulalating, tempered the murmurs and whisperings – are they really going to live cheek by jowl with US in the villages yonder, across the rivers and in the deep mountain valleys? Will they tolerate the poverty, ignorance, ill-health and the strange

customs and traditions, where a man reigns supreme and the woman is the power in the house and fields? Will they eat the food, face the climate, loneliness and lack of basic amenities in health, entertainment, transportation and communications?

Welcome courtesies and speeches having been completed, the journey into Mokhotlong, into the very heart of the colourful blankets and straw hats – began in earnest!

Yes, the Peace Corps Programme began with a bang and it has continued unabated ever since. It is not for me to quantify the benefit Lesotho has reaped from association with people of the U.S. Others are more qualified to make an appraisal of the benefits that have accrued to our people – children, women and men these many years. Posterity and our grandchildren will be wiser and on reflection, taste the sweetness of constructive developmental engagement in the true sense!

Now, as our country treads cautiously, the road of a democratic society with its expectations of national unity, peace and economic development for the common good, the impact of the Peace Corps Programme will remain as a lasting monument of gratitude and deep appreciation to those gallant ambassadors of the U.S.A. KHOTSO! PULA!! NALA!!!

ONE OF MANY WHO BEAR TESTIMONY TO  
THE PEACE CORPS PROGRAMME

Sincerely,  
Dr. A D Lebona  
(Maseru, Lesotho)

### NGOs

*(continued from page 1)*

ment officials and representatives of international institutions. Where until recently NGOs were struggling just to survive in the context of undemocratic governments in Southern Africa, the process of democratization has allowed NGOs to expand and have more of an impact.

Ntate Santho presented the case of Lesotho (whose Council of NGOs includes 105 groups involved in, among other things, education, health, rural development, women's advancement) where the main coordinating role in the drought relief effort of 1992 was assumed by the NGO council. Ultimately, a significant amount of the drought relief fund financed by the Red Cross, Caritas and other external relief agencies was channelled through the council.

Aware of both the advantages and potential pitfalls of the NGO movement in Africa, Santho believes that African NGOs have a vital role to play and need to work toward developing "their own capacities."

*(Information from "African Farmer," October 1993)*

### Lesotho Dignitaries Visit United States

*(continued from page 1)*

United States in October and meet with FOL as part of that trip. In particular, he wished to thank FOL for its efforts in assisting the embassy and was extremely impressed with the fact that FOL sent a letter to President Clinton requesting the speedy appointment of a new U.S. ambassador to Lesotho, stating they desperately need some one in place while they take their first steps toward democratic rule. He also expressed thanks for the assistance FOL has managed to send back to Lesotho and assured Don that the Prime Minister would be made aware of the group and its goals. Don made mention of the close cooperation being received from the Lesotho embassy staff and asked simply that those lines of communication remain open to FOL so that the membership could be kept informed. Both Ntate Baholo and the ambassador assured that this would take place. The Board is highly encouraged by the embassy's support of FOL and intends to pursue this avenue as it clearly benefits both parties.

William Clinton  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Clinton:

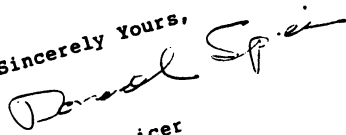
On behalf of the Board of Directors and nearly 300 members of the FRIENDS OF LESOTHO, I urge the swift appointment of an ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Southern Africa. Our people-to-people service organization, comprised largely of professionals, AID and lived and worked in Lesotho as Peace Corps volunteers, has monitored the relationship of the United States and Lesotho since 1986. From our perspective this is a pivotal year due to the change in administration of both governments. We are concerned that further delay in the appointment process will tarnish the image and reality of U.S. support for the recent transition to democratic rule in Lesotho. We are also concerned the situation may degrade our country's constructive political influence in that important part of the world.

The extended vacancy in the post of ambassador to Lesotho could not occur at a worse time. National elections in March of this year successfully ended over twenty years of either one-party or military rule in Lesotho. Our assessment is the Basotho people expect clear, visible signs of support by the United States to strengthen their fragile democracy during these crucial first months. The appointment of an ambassador is certainly an important sign of support.

We write particularly since you stated during your campaign that the promotion and support of democracy around the world would be among your primary foreign affairs objectives. We are concerned that the current situation sends a message to anti-democratic elements that free elections are inconsequential outside of countries with significant U.S. national interests, such as Russia and South Africa.

We urgently request the post of ambassador be filled as soon as possible. Furthermore, we would appreciate knowing how soon you intend to name an ambassador to Lesotho.

Sincerely Yours,



Donald Spicer  
President

HARRIS WOFFORD  
PENNSYLVANIA

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3803  
(202) 224-6324

August 25, 1993

Friends of Lesotho  
2801 Spencer Rd.  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Dear Friends:

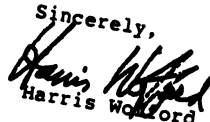
Having had the honor and pleasure of speaking at the National RPCV Conference in San Francisco, I commend each of you for your role in making it a success.

Since the conference, I have learned of a new "RPCV Ad Hoc Hunger Group" that is asking RPCVs to help promote and take part in upcoming regional forums on hunger. The forums, inspired by a fast conducted by my colleague and RPCV Congressman Tony Hall last April, are to be sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

You soon will receive a letter from the Ad Hoc group noting the deserved credibility of RPCVs on the subject of hunger. The Ad Hoc group asks especially for names and addresses of people who were agriculture volunteers, as they are more likely to have considered the relationship between U.S. pricing policies and both domestic and global hunger. The Ad Hoc group will forward forum locations and dates to you as soon as they are announced.

On another front, I want to thank all of you for your help in passing the National Community Service Trust Act. Your efforts made the difference.

Sincerely,



Harris Wofford

ENVIRONMENT AND PL  
LABOR AND HUMAN I  
FOREIGN RELATI  
SMALL BUSINE

## Hello from California

Khotso nate Don Spicer,

The handful of us is a small group of Basuto families in and around the San Francisco Bay Area .

Being so far from home and relatives we have felt a need to come together. This not only promotes a sense of belonging but it also serves to preserve our identity especially for the sake of our sons and daughters .

We meet monthly taking turns to be a host family. It was at one such meeting that the FOL organization was mentioned. This came about in response to our desire to make known the existence of Lesotho and its people to the people of the U.S.

Since then contact was made and a prompt response followed from Lisa LaBella not to mention the correspondence since received from you Don which we so much appreciated.

Our group met on October 31, 1993. The five families represented signed up and paid the \$10.00 yearly membership fee. I am leaving it up to you to determine whether our group belongs under Complimentary or Associate Non-Members listing.

We are ambitious about speaking on Lesotho but just do not know how to go about it. Besides us we have another handful of enthusiastic Basuto in Southern California to whom I will be mailing membership blanks.

While I am still to inform our Ambassador about our group and desire for his blessings we also hope that this letter will appear in your next news letter so that FOL around here

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## Lesotho Highland Water Project

**T**he LHWP, now in progress under a new government in Lesotho, is under constant scrutiny by the Basotho people who still question its merit for the struggling country. The 3000 temporary jobs that have been generated by construction will dwindle to 200 permanent positions once the project is complete, and many of the people who are directly employed presently in building the dam are from South Africa. Some villages have already experienced water shortages, housing shortages and sanitation problems as well as various "social" problems associated with the influx of "strangers." When the project eventually floods 11,000 hectares of arable land, the problem of land shortages and overgrazing will only be aggravated. Questions of resettlement, compensation, environmental impact and rural development are still being negotiated. For now, no irrigation water from the project is available in Lesotho and there are projections that the Basotho will continue to pay what they do now for electricity. Whether or now the LHWP will meet the expectations for water, jobs, increased tourism, etc. clearly remains to be seen.

*(from Panascope," Oct. 1993, No. 37)*

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and in Southern California may know of us. I believe together we can do more for your organization.

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