



*Friends of Lesotho*

## Friends Of Lesotho

4110 Denfeld Ave  
Kensington, MD 20895

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## Queen Mother Dies

Nkhono 'Mamohato Bereng Seeiso, the mother of King Letsie III, died September 6, 2003 from apparent heart failure at the age of 62. The Queen Mother was revered by all Basotho and had just been officially named the "Grandmother of the Nation." A very large state funeral was held and she was laid to rest at the St. Louis mission in Matsieng next to her daughter, who died in 1994.

The Queen Mother was known for her contributions to social development in the country, especially those involving women and children. She was the matriarch of the Morija Arts and Cultural Festival and established the Queen's National Trust Fund to assist needy but gifted children with primary and secondary education. Her leadership and presence will be greatly missed among the Basotho.

## Highlands Water Project History/Update

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is one of the most massive water engineering projects in the world and has dramatically transformed the nature of the mountain areas of Lesotho. The project involves the building of a series of dams and tunnels in the Maluti Mountains to capture water and transfer it to Guateng Province (Johannesburg and surrounding areas) in South Africa for agricultural, industrial and residential



Katse Dam Spillway (LHWP Web site)

use. In addition to the engineering accomplishments, the project has engendered a fair amount of controversy, corruption and social change in the lives of the people who live in the mountains.

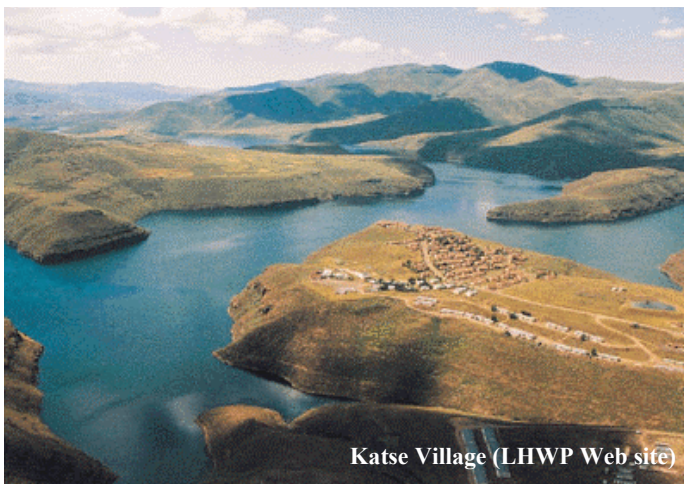
The first part of the project involved building Katse Dam across the Malibatso River and the first major tunnel through the mountains. That part of the project has been complete for several years. The final part of phase 1 was the building of Mohale Dam across the Senqunyane river and a water transfer tunnel. This part is nearly complete. Three more dams and transfer tunnels are planned, but these plans are on hold. The benefit of the project to South Africa is clear – an abundant source of clean water. The benefit to Lesotho is a little more murky.

The project provides income for Lesotho – news reports vary, but it seems Lesotho receives about 120 million Maluti (approx. \$17 million at current rates) per year from the sale of water to South Africa. The project generates all of Lesotho's electricity and provides about 7000 jobs. The road network has turned an arduous 1-2 day journey into an easy 1-2 hour journey with regular taxi service. Recently, the project released water into smaller Lesotho rivers to help alleviate the severe drought conditions in the Lowlands. The project has also increased tourism in the mountains and provided funding

### Inside this issue:

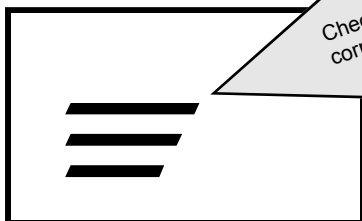
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## Highlands Water Project (cont)



# Are your Dues Due?

Check the upper right hand corner of your mailing label!



for nature and cultural reserves.

Critics claim that little of the money has been used to improve the lives of average Basotho. According to the International Rivers Network, family income in the Malibamatso area has fallen 65 percent faster than in the rest of the country. Much of the construction work has been done by workers brought in from South Africa. The improved access to the mountains has been blamed for an increase in crime, alcoholism and HIV infection rates estimated at higher than 40 percent.

According to news reports, the project has resulted in the destruction of large amounts agricultural land and thousands of villagers have been dispossessed of their homes. Some of these villagers have complained bitterly that they have been forced to move and received little in the way of economic support to rebuild their lives. Others feel they have been fairly reimbursed.

High profile trials in Lesotho have resulted in findings that engineering firms contracted for the project have engaged in large-scale corruption. Accusations have also been made that much of the income from the project has gone to government officials who have used it to keep political supporters in line. Certainly, the benefits have been unevenly distributed. The power lines that bring electricity to Maseru pass over many villages that have no electric lights burning.

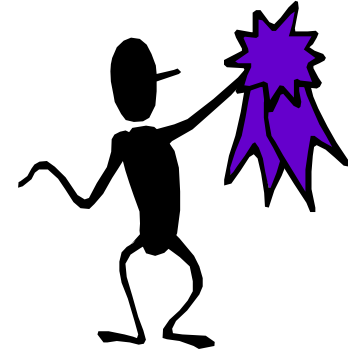
Some personal observations. I was a PCV in the Malibamatso Valley before the start of the project ('Mamohau, 1979-82.) Life seemed relatively peaceful and predictable. People lived at a steady, self-sufficient rhythm, worked long hours in their fields and had little access to consumer goods, health care and quality education. Over the past 6 years I've visited the area a few times. Life has changed – one can't help but notice the increased signs of violence and social disruption. Villages that used to keep in close contact are now cut off by the rising waters. Signs of a different kind of poverty are evident – as one nun at 'Mamohau mission reports in the Washington Post, they have a brand new mortuary. The trouble is, it is always full. Rough looking shebeens and restaurants give the area a kind of frontier feel and I've been told that Peace Corps no longer feels it is safe to send volunteers to the area. One hopes the project will lead to greater prosperity for Lesotho, but the road to the future has not been easy for villagers living in the mountain valleys.

Information sources: Washington Post; International Rivers Network; LHWP website; Mopheme Lesotho; World Commission on Dams. All these sources are available in the Internet.

Richard Rowan

## Web Site Wins Prize

NCPA gave Bill Dunn the NCPA Web Award for 3rd Place! Check out the web site at <http://www.friendsoflesotho.org>



## Dayton Daily News

A series of recent articles in the *Dayton Daily News* has raised issues related to PCV safety. Lesotho was featured prominently in these articles. The articles included a comment that from 1997-1999, Lesotho had the second highest rate of serious assaults among Peace Corps' African countries. To read up on the report, and to learn about the controversy visit FOL's website or:

The Dayton Daily News: <http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/>

Peace Corps General Counsel's response: <http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1026peacecorpsletter.html>

Friends of Lesotho does not wish to take a stand on the allegations in the *Dayton Daily News* articles. We simply do not have sufficient resources to do our own investigation and feel that what resources we do have would be better spent on our traditional activities. However, we do believe that the topic is an important one, and you may want to check it out.

## Peace Corps Week

To commemorate the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps, returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPVC's) will celebrate Peace Corps Week on March 1 through March 7, 2004. For more info: Agnes Ousley, Peace Corps Day Coordinator, [Aousley@PeaceCorps.gov](mailto:Aousley@PeaceCorps.gov)

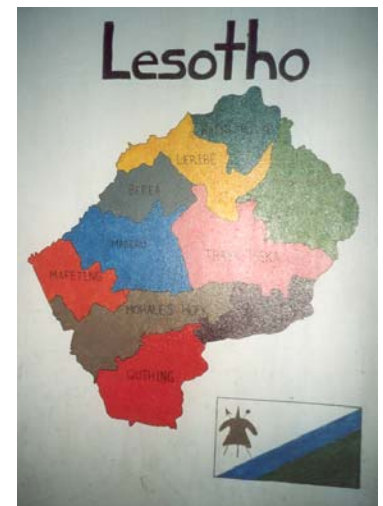
## Donations

This year, members of FOL have donated over \$8500 for projects in Lesotho—Tuition Assistance, Volunteer Liason Committee and HIV/AIDS. We especially thank Jen and Christopher Onken for their contribution of over \$3000!

## Literacy Project

Kevin Freer (PCV 76-78) has been working with ProLiteracy Worldwide, which is supporting LECUSDE (Lesotho Ecumenical Society for Development). LECUSDE strongly advances fundamental literacy skills for women and youth, and addresses issues including health care, micro finance, sustainable environment, human rights issues and women's status/legal rights. They work to enable individuals and communities to attain the literacy-based skills, information and insights to meet basic needs, improve lives and start joint action projects to solve root problems of poverty and injustice. Learning includes reading, writing, and math in the Southern-Sotho language as well as practical instruction in health, nutrition, poultry-raising, AIDS, saving clubs, reforestation and other topics requested by participants.

For more information or to donate, contact Lynn Curtis, VP International Programs, ProLiteracy Worldwide at [intl@proliteracy.org](mailto:intl@proliteracy.org) or 315-422-9121 X330.



On the next 6 pages are Thank You notes and photos from many of the people in Lesotho who have benefited from the donations of FOL members. The Tuition Assistance Project (TAP) provides scholarships to primary and secondary school students based on academic performance and financial need. Tuition costs per year averaging \$15 for Primary School, and \$77 for High School, every cent can make a difference to a Masotho. TAP is administered by a committee of Peace Corps Education Volunteers. Besides TAP, The Volunteer (VLC) provides grants to current PCVs for small projects which would otherwise be too small to be considered by major donor NGOs. PCVs in country determine how best to use the funding.

Dear TAP Sponser

My name is Mamonsti Mosenye. I am in 5TD5. I am 12 year old. I live at Thabong, Lesotho. I attend school at Paray Primary. My Favourite subjects are English and health. After school I like play netball.

Thank you very much for your help with my school fees.

Sincerely  
Mamontsi Mosenye

Paray Primary school  
P.O. Box 11  
Thaba Tseka 550  
Lesotho

Dear TAP sponser

My name is Maclena Josephin Mamonye. I live at Thabong II. I am thirteen years old. I attend school at Paray Primary school. I am in class 7. I am a girl. My clan is Mokoena. I am a first girl in my family.

I thank you for helping me with my school fees.

Yours sincerely,  
Maclena Mamonye

Dear Tap Sponser

My name is Lejone. I am in standard 7 class. I am 13 years old. I live at Thabong II, Lesotho. I attend school at paray primary school. My favourite subjects are maths, English and science. After school I like to study and go at the library so that I can gain a lot of vocabulary.

Thank you very much for helping me with my school fees.

Yours sincerely,  
Lejone Sekhampu

Aug 2, 2003

Dear TAP Sponsors,

On behalf of these talented, needy students of Paray PS, Thaba Tseka, Lesotho, Thank you for allowing them to further their education....

All the Best,  
Jennifer Ouken, PCV

We also received notes from Tankiso Mokoena, Standard 7; Toroti Ntamiri, Std 7; Sebaka Mphosi Daniel who wishes to become a Doctor; Lebohany Camilus NTOKO in Std 6; Tebello Daemane in Std 6 from Ponseng; and Refiloe Makara in Std 5 who enjoys playing netball.



Thank you for once again donating funds to the Khukhune High School newspaper club. An FOL grant ... helped start this newspaper club... Thankfully, the students can now put together the newspaper themselves. They are now learning computer literacy skills on top of improving their English and writing skills. Your FOL grant has been used to purchase a converter for the printer, proper electric cords, an extension cord, and a circuit board.... The club will use the computer in various income-generating ways in order to have money for future computer needs...our club is very grateful for your support and very happy that the computer is now running. On behalf of the Khukhune Newspaper Club, thank you very much.

Sincerely yours, Matthew Osborne-Smith



### Mural painted by Meeling PS Std 7 students

Students from the 3 local primary schools painted murals on the library walls. Each school had a theme: Education, Community and Healthy Living. Community members also helped fill the walls with awesome pictures. They loved having the chance to create their own library.

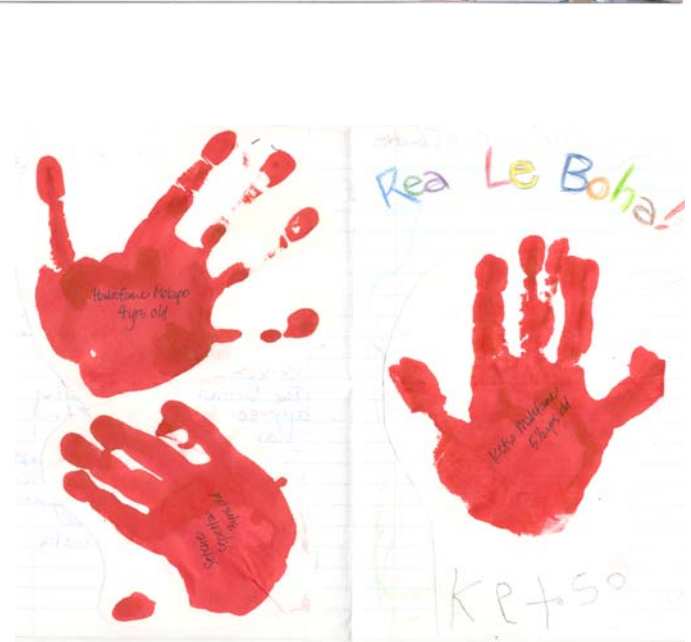
Ha Sephapo, Mohale's Hoek, Oct 2002.

Jean & John Thornley, PCV's Ed



This is the only picture I have of the inside of the library where you can see any of the shelves that your money made possible. You'll just have to imagine great shelves lining the halls. Standard 7 students from Meeling Primary School in Sephapo's Library. Oct 2002.

Jean & John Thornley, Ha Sephapo, M Hoek.



### Friends of Lesotho

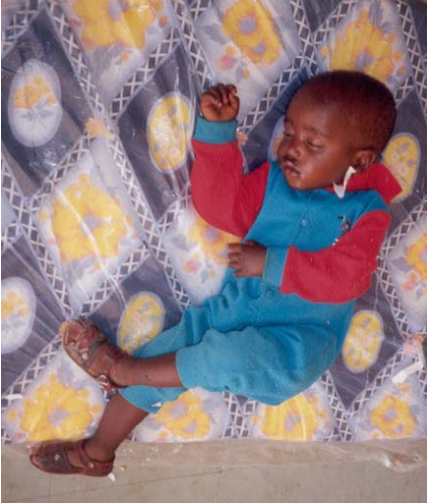
We are very honoured to have friends who really care about youths in sports, especially in our little team of boxing in Mafeteng district.

We really thank you from the bottom of our hearts to receive the gift of which will help us to achieve some of our goals.

Thank you

Mafeteng Amateur Boxing Club





30 May 2002

Dear Friends of Lesotho,

Thank you very much for your generous contribution of R300 which helped the Ntoetse ECCD center in Ha Molapo to purchase 10 mattresses.

As you can see by the enclosed photos, the teachers and children are very happy to have these mats as it makes their naptime and storytime much more comfortable, especially in the winter months.

This purchase also required participation by the childrens' parents and other members of the community to provide R100 towards the total purchase price and to arrange transport for delivery of the mattresses. I believe this spirit of community and cooperation is an additional benefit to us all and was also facilitated by your donation.

Thank you very much

Mary Simonson, PCV, Ha Molapo

April 10, 2002

Dear Friends of Lesotho,

It doesn't feel possible, but we have been here nine months already. We are at Matheko Youth Center in Thaba Tseka.

We were asked by the principal to set up a Student Enterprise Project using vegetable growing as the business. Funding for the project was not available from the Government so we thought the venture wouldn't get started. We applied for a FOL Grant that was approved. With the money from your organization we were able to buy the seeds needed to plant the gardens. The students have worked bery hard on their gardens and are now harvesting and selling their vegetables to the community. The students are getting a hands-on approach to starting and running their own businesses.

None of this could have een accomplished without your generous support and good will. Your continued contribution means so much to our work here in Lesotho.

Sincerely,

Chris and Marianne Leal



18 August 2002

Dear FOL Committee,

This is a very belated Thank you for your grant of April 2002 in the amount of R268.00.

I enclose ... photos of the many young herdsmen who profited from your generosity. Altogether, and to date, approximately 10 young men have earned a total of R800. Although it has been easy to sell the hats outside Lesotho, finding a market within the country has proved more difficult.

It is my hope that the project will continue in my absence, but I am unsure. What is true is that many young men now know they have marketable skill.

Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Karen Allen

PCV Malelefiloane, Lesotho



Thank You Letter

Dear Friends

How would you do?

Firstly we would like to pass on our thanks for the money you gave us to buy paints used to paint maps seen on the walls of our classrooms.

We would like to thank you for your help with our pupils' studies. You gave us a tool with which to face the future.

This is not the end of the road, but the beginning. Surely our pupils will have a brighter future. We could never have forgotten this far.

It's only the Lord knows how grateful we are. Words can't thank enough for your assistance, can't describe how you have made us feel blessed.

Thank you.

All from the staff members of Sefapanong Primary.



Nov 1, 2002

Dear friends of Lesotho,

Because of your generosity, I was able to hold a Textile Workshop on October 26, 2002.

The textile staffs of both TTI and Matheko Youth Centre were brought together for the first time, in TabaTseka's history, for a joint inservice program. Eight Bo'me were instructed in the use of fabric paint and were taught different techniques; stenciling, stamping, print making and batik.

It was a successful event and the Bo'me were proud of their accomplishments! The staff of Matheko Youth Centre has even scheduled their own workshop to pass on what they learned.

Thank you again for your generosity and continued support!

Sincerely,

Marianne Keal, PCV





Here is a std 7 student named Paulina painting litema patterns around the entrance to the Ha Sphapo Community Library, Oct 2002.

Jean & John Thornley

October 16, 2002

Dear Friends of Lesotho,

This letter is to inform you that my project at Paray Primary School is completed thank to the kind and generous donation. I was able to paint permanent visual aids on the classroom wall that will be used for years to come. I have been able to witness the teachers and students using the visuals and they are all happy with the new addition to the school. On behalf of Paray Primary school students and teachers I want to say again how thankful we are for giving us the funds to create such a valid teaching aid in our classroom.

Sincerely,

Becky Sudduth, PCV



Oct 23, 2002

Dear Friends of Lesotho,

Thanks to your generosity, I was able to have students at Matheko Youth Centre do a Beading Project.

The second year carpentry students built the bead looms and the second year Textile students made some beaded items.

The project was so popular that now all 100 students at the school want to learn how to use the looms!

Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,

Marianne Keal, PCV

PS Unfortunately the photos I took did not come out. Sorry!



Dec 12, 2001

Dear FOL

Thank you for your support of the Bishop Alland Library. Bookcases!

Kathy, PCV 00-02

October 24, 2002

FOL

I greatly appreciate the money you donated to my painting project.

I painted ECCD daycare in Quthing with the help of three fellow Peace Corps Volunteers. We painted various educational teaching aids.

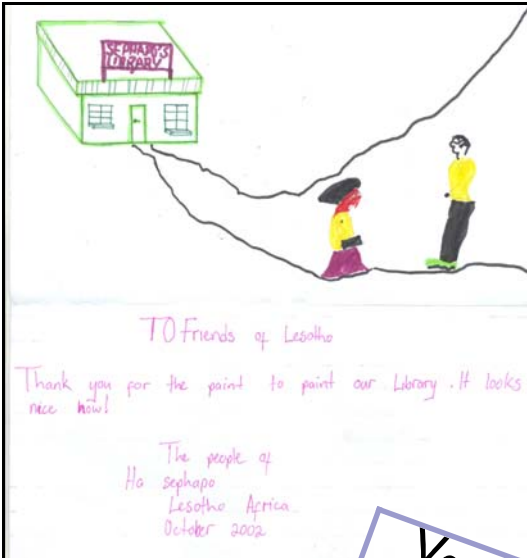
"m'e Matebello, ECCD's head teacher is implementing numerous education activities with the newly painted teaching aids.

Thank you!

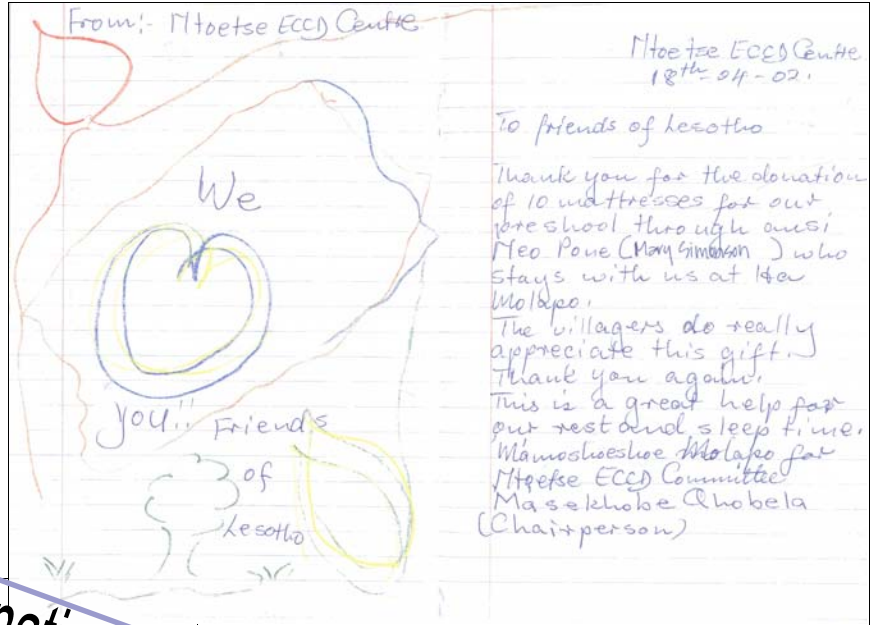
Sincerely

Becky Bowman





TO Friends of Lesotho  
 Thank you for the paint to paint our Library. It looks nice now!  
 The people of  
 Ho sephapo  
 Lesotho Africa  
 October 2002



**Your donations are tax deductible.**

Mphaki Health Centre  
 May 8, 2002  
 Quthing 700 Lesotho

Friends of Lesotho  
 Dear Friends

I, on behalf of Mphaki Health Centre, The Quthing Health Service Area, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the government of Lesotho, would like to thank you a lot for the M450. you offered to us through Mr James, which we used to buy 3 benches for the health centre.

This gift has made a really difference in the comfort of our patients, who due to shortage of seats were most of the time forced to sit on the rough rocks outside the clinic. The gift came at a good time, ie winter, when the rocks besides being rough are too cold to sit on and the outside weather is also cold.

Thank you again.

M Lea Tlali, Registered Midwife, Mphaki H Centre



November 3, 2002

Dear Friends of Lesotho,

Because of your support, I was able to complete a world map project at Matheko Youth Centre in Thaba Tseka. Some of the students enjoyed helping with the actual painting of the map and it afforded me a great opportunity to do some non-formal education in geography and current world events.

The map was done in the school's dining hall which is also used by other organizations. So, the community at large will also benefit from your generosity.

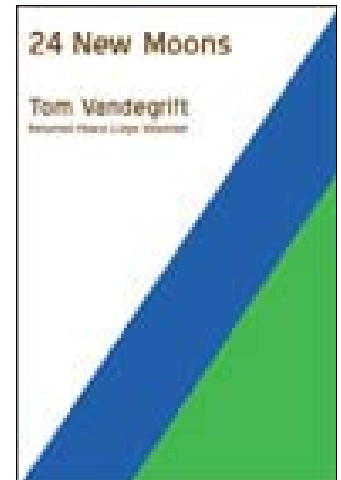
Thank you for your continued support.



## 24 New Moons

Tom Vandegrift, PCV Lesotho 1999-2001, has written a book about his Peace Corps years, *24 New Moons*, available on the web at [www.bbotw.com](http://www.bbotw.com), or local bookstores. He says:

“After I retired, my wife and I spent two years with the US Peace Corps in the “Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho”. Because we were older than most volunteers, we brought a perspective to the experience that let us see it from a different vantage point than many of our younger colleagues and friends. Out time in a Third World country made me re-think some of the beliefs I had held about foreign aid and development efforts. ... (The book) juxtaposes the experience against the context of international aid programs. It's not a tale of swash-buckling adventure because day-to-day living doesn't soar to that level, but it is a story of discovery and insight. I believe it's a book the Friends of Lesotho (or Friends of Anywhere) could use to advantage. It provides another perspective on the international arena.”



## Murder at Morija

*Murder at Morija* is a book by Tim Couzens, published by Random House.

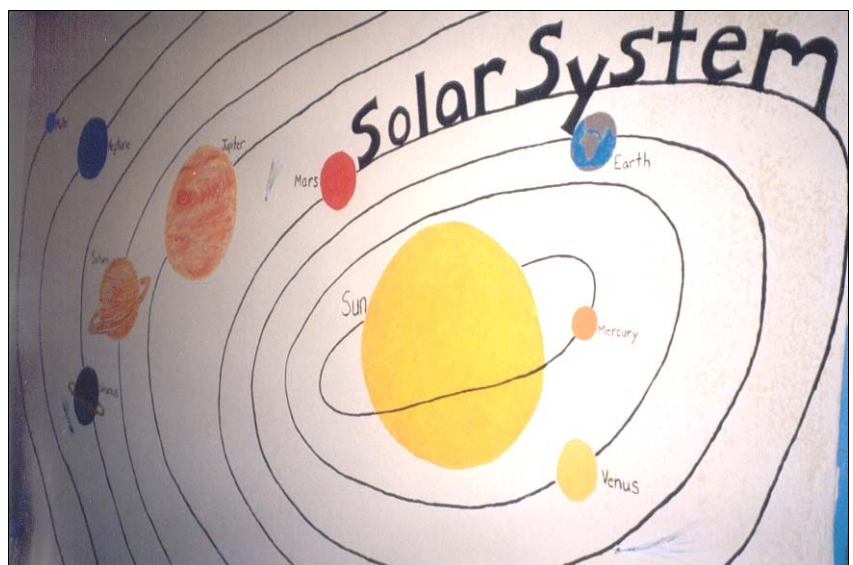
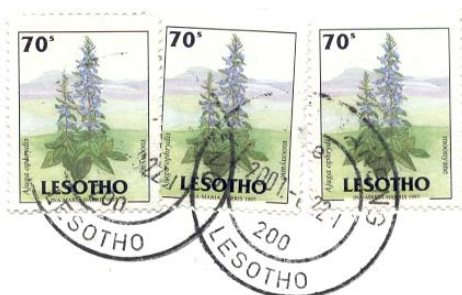
David Ambrose wrote this review of the book:

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1920, the Rev Édouard Jacottet, the Director of the Theological School at Morija, sat down to lunch with five other people, one of his three daughters, Madeleine, and four guests. Not long after they had taken the soup – Jacottet's favourite soup, and he alone took two helpings – all of those who had been at the table became violently ill. Although the others survived, Jacottet died that night... So who did murder Jacottet? You will have to read the book, *Murder at Morija*, to find out...

If you acquire the book, you will have more than just a murder mystery. It has 496 pages of text and 64 pages of illustrations. It provides an insightful history of Lesotho up until the 1920's, including an account of the work of writers such as Thomas Mofolo (who also lapsed from the moral rectitude expected by the missionaries). You can also read about the origins of the strands of Protestantism which found their way to Lesotho, and contrastingly, on famous poisoners and their fates.

The origins of the book go back to 1991, when Professor Tim Couzens was External Examiner in English at the National University of Lesotho. He had with him a novel, *Love at the Mission*, published obscurely overseas. It was set in a country called Bantusiland, which Couzens felt could possibly be Lesotho. It was at NUL that he learned that what he had was not just a novel, but actually a true story of a poisoning. The writer (who had been the wife of the public analyst who had detected arsenic in Jacottet's stomach) had been so intrigued by the events that she had woven them into a novel and published it pseudonymously.

With the lead, Couzens set out to unravel the murder mystery, something he does sympathetically, for what occurred was a disaster to the church. It lost its two finest scholars. His book is not only compelling reading, but likely to be an important text on Lesotho and its history for many years to come.



# Friends of Lesotho

4110 Denfeld Ave.  
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Tel (301) 942-2751  
http://friendsoflesotho.org



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Additional contribution to Friends of Lesotho \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total to FOL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(All dues/contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.)

### FOR RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS ONLY:

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

\*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY NEW OR CHANGED INFORMATION FOR THE FOL DIRECTORY

Check if no changes

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

YEARS IN LESOTHO:

Peace Corps \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Village \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

list email on web site?  yes  no

Work Program \_\_\_\_\_

Family Members: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### PLEASE NOTE:

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

- a) Organizations selling merchandise and publications
- b) Professional organizations concerning employment
- c) Other non-profit organizations.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

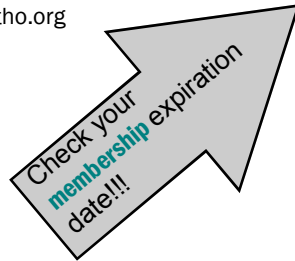
Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Member Since \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Source \_\_\_\_\_

Renew Date \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Members \_\_\_\_\_ NPCA \_\_\_\_\_

*Friends of Lesotho*

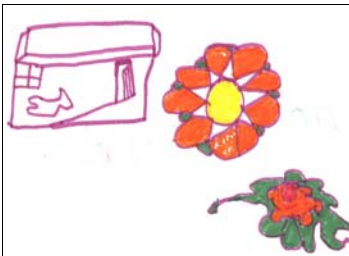
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Email: [wdunn@friendsoflesotho.org](mailto:wdunn@friendsoflesotho.org)



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.FRIENDSOFLESOOTH.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFLESOOTH.ORG)



To friends of Lesotho  
Thank you for all of your help  
with our library. Our children finally have  
a chance to read now.  
The teachers of  
Ha Sephapo  
Mohlale Hoek-Lesotho  
October 2002

To friends of Lesotho  
Thank you for helping  
us make shelves for our  
library. We love to read!  
The Students of Ha Sephapo  
October 2002  
LE Lesotho

