



FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

METSOALLE ea LESOTHO

Fourth Quarter 2018
Newsletter

A Word From Our President

Newsletter Features Clickable Links!!
Download the newsletter from the FOL website www.friendsoflesotho.org and you will be able to click on all the website addresses.

Lumelang Metsoalle,

First, I wanted to thank our members who continue to support our work and the board members for all the hours they have put in. I am pleased to report that Friends of Lesotho (FOL) continues to fulfil its mission to promote positive change and to assist the people of Lesotho.

This fall, FOL launched a back-to-school fundraiser to help raise funds for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). I am delighted to announce that we exceeded our target goal and were able to raise over \$6,700. FOL is very thankful to all who supported the cause. These funds combined with the generous support from the American School in Taipei and other donors, allowed FOL to provide

\$16,400 worth of TAP scholarships. This will enable over 70 deserving Basotho youth to attend high school this year. The scholarship money was requested by 18 volunteers across several districts in Lesotho. As a volunteer, I first learned about FOL when I applied for TAP funds to help my neighbors' daughter attend Forms B and C in TY nearly 30 years ago. The TAP scholarship remains one of the cornerstones of FOL's commitment to Lesotho. So many of us have seen the impact of these scholarships and perhaps even helped a student receive one. I am so thankful that so many of you remember this and continue to help FOL make a High School education possible for scores of deserving students each year.

To make sure that funds donated to FOL are effectively used to assist in the continued economic development of Lesotho and the Basotho people, FOL is exploring developing a partnership with RISE project in Lesotho. FOL and RISE share many of the same goals and beliefs regarding development in Lesotho. By forming a partnership with an NGO on the ground in Lesotho, FOL can be sure that our grants are being used in the most efficient manner possible and have the greatest impact.

On a personal note, I am pleased that I will be able to take 25 college students to Lesotho this summer to spend a month working with orphans and HIV+ children in Lesotho. This will be the 15th such group that I have led and hopefully, once again, we will have an opportunity to work with Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) serving in the country.

I am pleased to report that our new free membership policy has led to an increase in FOL members, especially an increase in the number of Basotho living in Lesotho.

For those interested in learning more about the history of development in Lesotho, I would strongly encourage you to read John Aerni-Flessner's new book "Dreams for Lesotho."



Sincerely,
Dr. Scott Rosenberg
President, FOL
Honorary Consul, Kingdom of Lesotho

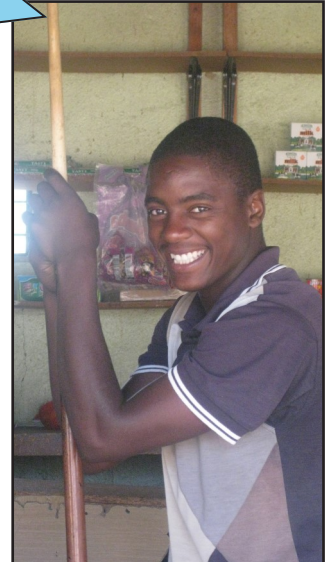


Photo courtesy Nicole Potsane, RPCV

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John Hollister, We Salute You John Hollister's Legacy and Tributes

John lives, has always lived, the service ethic to a tee in my estimation.

From the moment we connected while serving on the young FOL board he was always the first to pitch in to do the tasks that required persistence, follow through, and thoroughness. That got my attention fast and I was pleased our work expanded into an easy-going friendship as we celebrated our accomplishments along with the work.

Those qualities never go out of style, so learning that John is retiring makes me pause and recall all the years of commitment and results; all that John has contributed to in one way or another. What a legacy. Thank you, John, for all you gave of yourself over the years. Friends of Lesotho, and each of us you befriended, are better for knowing and working with you.

*With gratitude and deep friendship,
Scott Brumburgh
Founding Board Member and Past President 1986-1988*

John has been one of the foundations of FOL for a very long time. I may be wrong but I thought he was also at the meeting where FOL came to be in 1886. I do know, after having served as treasurer for a good many years up until 2003, that John has done a wonderful job in that role ever since. From my experience, it takes a lot of time and effort and John has also made it much more professional. He will be missed on the Board. Best wishes to him going forward.

*Don Spicer
Founding Board Member and Past President 1988-2003*

There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to keep an organization like FOL alive. No one has donated more of his time to FOL than our Treasurer John Hollister. He has been treasurer for the past 18 years or so.

Every month John processes all the postal and electronic donations received by FOL and he also processes all our postal mail. He does FOL's taxes, files the necessary paperwork to keep us in good standing with the charitable organization clearing houses and keeps our registration up-to-date with the State of Maryland. None of this work gets much notice, but without it, FOL would have disappeared years ago.

As a former president of FOL, and chair of various committees, I knew I could always rely on John's advice. He would let us know if any of our policies would violate IRS rules and he provided reports to the Board of Directors that helped us make decisions when considering which projects FOL wanted to fund. He always provided sound and valuable advice to the rest of the Board and served as our institutional memory.

As John plans his retirement, we know we will miss him, and we'll have to replace him with two or three people. Many hundreds of Basotho men, women and children have received help from FOL because of John's selfless efforts. We wish him well. He's truly the unsung hero of Friends of Lesotho.

*Richard Rowan
Past President 2009-2011*

John has been the bedrock of the FOL Board for many years, beginning with his contributions at the first organizational meeting in 1986 through the present, serving as Treasurer since 2003. John has provided stability and continuity to the Board, also serving as unofficial advisor to a series of Board Presidents and Directors.

While serving on the Board, I greatly valued John's advice and counsel, especially while serving as FOL President. John has had a unique historical perspective on organizational initiatives which translated to workable policies and procedures we have followed with his advice. He has made sure we were fiscally responsible with our resources in order to sustain our support to so many deserving people and projects in Lesotho.

Many have not been aware of the multiple tasks that John performed behind the scenes without affirmation and recognition. We have been very fortunate to have John serve in a leadership position for so long. John's dedication, exemplary service, work ethic, and attention to so many details will be greatly missed. Thank you, John, for all you have done on behalf of all of us.

*Kevin Freer
Past President 2011-2014*



Interview with John Hollister—Retiring FOL Treasurer

PCV Service: Thaba Tseka District Engineer, Village Water Supply, 1986–1988.

FOL Contributions: John has served multiple roles to support the work of the FOL Board since 1990. John has served as the Treasurer for the FOL Board since February 2003. John has been interested in assuring continuity on the Board throughout his tenure with FOL. John is currently a Civil Engineer with Montgomery County, Maryland, working in the storm water management program.

What led you to take on the job of Treasurer back in 2003?

That happened by default. I was the only new person sitting around the table when the FOL Executive Committee decided to hand over leadership back in 2003.

How have your responsibilities changed over the years?

I was able to focus more on record keeping and activity support as the FOL Board expanded participation. As people came and went, I was also able to provide with a little bit of institutional knowledge.

What trends have you seen in terms of donations and disbursements of funds to Lesotho?

The process for sending project funds to PCVs in Lesotho changed when Peace Corps implemented the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP). It took a while, but we finally settled into a steady routine with PCPP. While we've had many generous donors over the years, the long-term support provided by the Taipei American School (TAS) was especially noteworthy. To a large extent, the fundraising by TAS teachers and students has bankrolled our Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).

What are you most proud of accomplishing as Treasurer?

Helping FOL manage growth at a time when Board participation continued to decentralize across the country. This required a real team effort.

What challenges do you believe FOL will experience in the future?

We've always struggled to manage Board continuity as volunteers came and went. FOL has managed through several significant changes, but that aspect will likely need more work. As long as people stay involved, however, FOL will be able to work through just about any new challenge that may come up.

What role do you plan on taking as a member of FOL when you retire from your position as Treasurer?

The Board can always ask questions. Of course, I will donate to FOL, but I won't be the well-endowed donor that FOL would like to have.

What other comments or thoughts do you have about your long tenure on the FOL Board?

Ever since starting as Treasurer, I got the impression from recently returned PCVs that the HIV situation has caused a lot of hardship in Lesotho. That alone is adequate reason to stay involved.



Staff Training, Thaba Tseka 1988



Eastern Mountain Range with Snow 1986

Submissions wanted!!

Help us create our awesome newsletter! We are looking for photographs, articles, news from the front, creative writing, reflections from your volunteer experience, travel essays, and anything else Lesotho-related.

Please send your submissions for the next FOL Newsletter to Tara Browne, tara.m.browne@gmail.com.

The next deadline is May 1st, 2018



METSOALLE ea LESOTHO

Fund a Class!

FOL's Most Successful Crowdfunder Ever Will Send a Classroom Full of Students Back to School!

By Stacey McKeever

This fall, Friends of Lesotho embarked on our second – and most successful! – crowdfunder to raise funds for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), which provides scholarships to deserving students in Peace Corps communities throughout Lesotho. We want to send a giant *Rea Leboha* to the 67 donors who raised over \$6,700 to support the TAP program!

In Lesotho, 90% of children attend primary school but fewer than half go to secondary school and only 10% have finished due to the cost. Participation in primary school is free and almost universal, and 92% of boys and 95% of girls attend. However, secondary school fees are not covered by the government and attendance drops off. Only 51% of girls and 35% of boys attend secondary school and only 10% of Basotho men and women have completed secondary school.

The school fees, books and exam costs - which can cost over \$200 a year - are beyond the reach of many, in a nation where over half live below the international poverty line.

Our goal this year was to “Fund a Class” and – thanks to so many of you - we did just that! 

A Poem by Grace Harman, RPCV Lesotho 2013-2015

A boy resting his head
On his friend's shoulder while
Praying
in morning assembly.
Closing his eyes,
momentarily.
Catching a last moment of
Rest
Before he must
begin the
Note-taking
Listening
Reading
Learning.

Four neighbor children
none of them older than four
only two of them wearing pants
scampering across the white rock mountain.
Yelping in delight
washed in sunshine
not a care in the
World.

While pumping water one day, I hear a deep-throated song
before I see who's singing

Then all at once
seven boys
my sixth and seventh grade students
emerge into view
walking and singing in perfect unison down the dirt road.
Their apparent conductor standing
Dead center
Waving his fingers and
Keeping time for everyone.

A moment of bliss as a donkey
Breaks free
from his stake in the ground
and runs down the hill.
Free
for just a moment
in Time.
Children, going about their daily
lives, inspired this poem.



Photo retrieved from <http://learninginlesotho.blogspot.com/2011/05/assembly-time.html>
Retrieved from <https://www.peacecorps.gov/educators/resources/sights-and-sounds/>
Have a poem about life in Lesotho you would like to share? Send to tara.m.browne@gmail.com



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

SHOPPING?? PLEASE USE FOL'S LINK TO AMAZON

Amazon donates a small percent of purchases made by 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>

One extra click by you enables FOL to send hundreds of dollars of donations to Lesotho each year.



The Hub at Morija

With support from funders such as Friends of Lesotho, The Hub at Morija continues to grow. The only initiative of its kind in Lesotho, The Hub is also the only space in Morija that provides affordable public access to computers, the internet and a library to members of a community with high youth unemployment rates, poverty, and very few positive outlets for young people.

The primary target of The Hub is young people between the ages of 10-35. Through its various activities, The Hub aims to foster a community of young people in Lesotho who are skilled, inspired, motivated and socially conscious.

Friends of Lesotho assisted The Hub in acquiring a hard drive that can be accessed wirelessly by all computers at the space. The hard drive stores all work my members of The Hub, including photography, film and animation projects. It also stores a library of tutorials, movies and documentary films.

In addition to being open for 5 days a week as a resource space, The Hub delivers a range of programs - including skills sessions, motivational talks, digital media workshops and community events. The Hub delivers workshops on a range of subjects including: basic computer skills, photography, film making, animation, human rights, women's rights, environmental awareness, creative writing, professional writing skills and more. At The Hub, students are able to access the internet to help with school work, research and information gathering that is otherwise unavailable to them.

Since opening in 2015, The Hub has seen a notable increase in The Hub's positive reputation both locally and internationally. It is very encouraging to note that The Hub is now well-known as a successful and reliable educational project in Lesotho. International organisations and institutions - including the Alliance Francaise de Maseru, Geneva University of Art & Design, Africa Code Week and Cultures of Resistance Films - have of their own accord approached The Hub with requests to hold educational activities, events and workshops. In addition to this, The Hub's Facebook page now has over 2,660+ followers, and 815+ followers on Instagram who keep up to date with our regular social media posts.

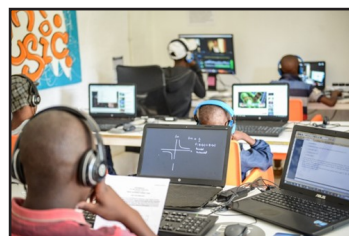
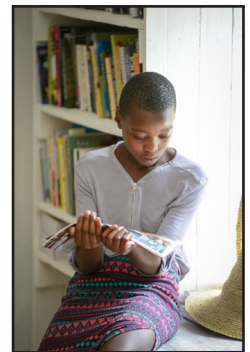
Stay up to date with the latest activities by following The Hub online:

Email: thehub@morija.co.ls
Website: thehubatmorija.co.ls
Facebook: facebook.com/thehubatmorija
Instagram: instagram.com/thehubatmorija
Twitter: twitter.com/thehubatmorija

Thank you,
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Litaba tsa Lesotho (News from Lesotho)

Chinese businessman discloses funding politicians in Lesotho

Chinese businessman Yan Xie who is a naturalized Mosotho and who has 24 registered companies in Lesotho including supermarkets, construction companies, farming, and quarries, has disclosed helping to fund events for individuals from various political parties in Lesotho. Funded events include weddings, birthday parties, etc. Few have confirmed the funding because Lesotho has no law that forces disclosure of party funding. Some controversy arose when Thabane appointed him “head of special projects and the prime minister’s special envoy and trade adviser on the China-Asia trade network” in August 2017. Concern has been raised regarding his influence regarding policies such as a ban on red meat imports, which benefits him, and the controversial wool and mohair policy.

Read the full story online at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-11-01-chinese-business-tycoon-reveals-how-he-helped-fund-politicians-in-lesotho-but-denies-claim-of-state-capture/>

The Lesotho Wool War

Disagreement between the Lesotho government and wool and mohair farmers led to the recent arrest of the spokesperson for the Lesotho Wool and Mohair Growers’ Association, Khotsang Moshoeshe, for encouraging growers to resist the government’s forced closure of the country’s wool shearing sheds. At issue are regulations issued in August 2018 that compel all the country’s wool and mohair producers to cut ties with South African-based wool brokerage BKB and supply their product to Maseru Dawning, a Lesotho-registered company run by Chinese businessman Guohui “Stone” Shi. Growers would like to sell to whomever they choose and protested the regulations in the streets of Maseru. They are refusing to sell to Maseru Dawning, and unsold wool is piling up in many areas. The association is reportedly preparing a Constitutional Court challenge. Read the full story online at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-10-11-the-tangled-web-of-the-lesotho-wool-war/> Read more about this issue at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001041.html

Commission urges release of suspects

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) has called on Lesotho to release suspects who have been confined without a trial in excess of the time permitted by law. They also criticized the state of the country’s prisons, saying they are overcrowded and struggling with the number of prisoners who are HIV positive – reportedly 31% of males and 69% of women in prison are living with HIV. Lesotho has a backlog of more than 3000 cases. Read more online at <http://www.lesitimes.com/release-suspects-au-mission-tells-govt/>

US signs pact to help Lesotho combat HIV

Lesotho and United States government signed another pact to combat HIV in the country. Under the agreement, the US planned to make available a grant of \$250 million to combat HIV/AIDS in Lesotho from now till 2023. The goal of the support is to ensure that all Basotho living with HIV/AIDS receive the testing, counselling, and treatment services they need to live healthy, productive lives. Read the full story online at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001069.html

Aggrieved families slam Metsing deal

The government and opposition parties signed an agreement that shields those accused of criminal conduct from prosecution and puts stalled national reforms back on track. The deal insulates exiled Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) leader Mothetjoa Metsing from prosecution “until after the reforms.” This has upset the families of victims of security forces’ who may challenge the legality of this agreement. Read the full story online at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001078.html

LCS diverts funds to chicken project

A Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing disclosed that government funds were diverted to start a chicken project without permission, and other money has been left uncollected for three years. Lesotho Correctional Services leased a piece of land to Pioneer Mall at a yearly rental of M 66,000 per year for 10 years. A 2014 audit report revealed that M 199,000 was deducted from the agreed sum to fence off the site (contrary to the contract which stipulated that any development to the site was Pioneer Mall’s responsibility). LCS reportedly invested the balance in a poultry project, instead of depositing the money into government accounts. Read the full story online at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001080.html

Minister, PS spat threatens health system

Disagreement has arisen between the Minister of Health, the ministry’s Principal Secretary, and the management of Queen ‘Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH), regarding patient admissions. According to hospital management, they were instructed to limit patient admissions. The state-of-the-art 425-bed hospital opened doors in October 2011 to replace the aging and outdated main public hospital, Queen Elizabeth II, and to upgrade the network of urban filter clinics and serves as the country’s main referral healthcare facility. The hospital is run by the Tšepong consortium of five companies, namely; Netcare Healthcare Group and Afri’nnai of South Africa, as well as Excel Health, Women Investment and D10 Investments from Lesotho, under an 18-year contract at the end of which the hospital passes into government full ownership. The government pays the consortium operating the hospital under an agreement that anticipated 20,000 inpatient admissions and 310,000 outpatient visits per year. However, due to the quality of care, the hospital is popular, and these numbers have been exceeded with more than 27,000 inpatients and nearly 350,000 outpatients treated in 2015 alone. In March this year, a report indicated that the government owed Tšepong M400

(Continued on page 7)



Litaba tsa Lesotho (continued from page 6)

million for treating patients in excess of the agreed upon numbers. Read more online at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001077.html

Opposition Pulls out of the Reform Process

Opposition parties recently pulled out of the reform process over the suspension of Chief Justice Nthomeng Majara's suspension. Amnesty International and Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA) have both condemned Majara's suspension. The opposition parties sought intervention from SADC regarding the matter. Read more at https://www.publiceyenews.com/pages/single_page2%204%2001043.html

ABC Infighting

Reports of infighting in Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's ruling All Basotho Convention (ABC) party reportedly threaten the multi-sector reforms recommended by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This assertion was made in a report by the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) that visited Lesotho in August. The report indicated that the main sticking point has been the continued exile in South Africa of opposition leader Mothetjoa Metsing and a request by Lesotho for him to be extradited to stand trial for corruption. Some have also drawn a comparison between Thabane's wife, Maesaiah, and the former Zimbabwean first lady Grace Mugabe, whose interference in politics led to a strong backlash inside the country. Read the full story at <http://www.lestimes.com/abc-infighting-threatens-reforms/>

Human Rights Concerns

THE African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) has expressed concern over the allegations of police brutality and torture by security forces. Concerns were also raised due to the conflict between the executive and judicial branches. Read more at <http://www.lestimes.com/au-raises-red-flag-over-lesothos-human-rights/>

Mothae begins commercial diamond mining

Australia-based Lucapa Diamond Company will be conducting diamond mining at its Mothae Mine in Mokhotlong, which has been idle since 2015. Lucapa paid \$9 million to acquire a 70% stake in the mine. The government owns the remaining 30% share. According to Lucapa, approximately 23,400 carats of diamonds were recovered during the trial mining phase, including specials of up to 254 carats and 96 individual stones weighing more than 10 carats. Some of these trial mining diamonds achieved sale prices of up to US\$57 000 per carat. Lucapa has budgeted \$17 million to commence Phase 1 of full-scale mining, which will run from 2018 to 2021. Phase 1 is expected to generate gross revenue of \$79.6 million while Phase 2, which will run from 2022 to 2031, is anticipated to generate gross revenue of \$697 million. The company also revealed that the first parcel of the Mothae bulk sampling diamonds has already been exported to Antwerp, Belgium and "Lucapa plans to export the remainder of the bulk sampling diamonds to Antwerp, ahead of the first scheduled sale soon." Reade more at <http://www.lestimes.com/mothae-begins-commercial-diamond-mining/>

LNDC wins award

THE Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) was recently awarded a United Nations Award for Promoting Investment in Sustainable Development at the United Nations Conference and Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The award recognizes excellence in boosting investment into sectors that will have social and economic benefits and help countries meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The award in particular recognised the LNDC for its horticulture project in Leribe. In the Land Trust model, land is bundled for scale and registered under one lease. For example, Stargrow Group from Stellenbosch and the Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification Project (PSCEDP), partnered to scale up the deciduous fruit farms in Lesotho, initially to 122 hectares, then 500 hectares and finally over 2000 hectares. The Out-grower Model allows other farmers to integrate into the supply chain and access formal, national and international markets. Read more at <http://www.lestimes.com/lndc-wins-global-accolade/>

Academia challenged to align with economic trends

South African finance minister, Tito Mboweni, was the key note speaker at this year's annual conference of Lesotho Institute of Accountants (LIA). An alumnus of the National University of Lesotho (NUL), urged institutions of higher learning to introduce educational programs that respond to the economic needs of the country. He asked what the institutions are doing to catch up with the economy and to diversify the employment pattern in Lesotho away from the civil service into industry.

To read more of Mboweni's comments, go to <http://www.lestimes.com/academia-challenged-to-align-with-economic-trends/>

Econet makes internet access more affordable

Econet Telecom Lesotho revised data contracts tariffs and introducing low-end monthly packages to ensure the affordability of the internet connection to all customers. Econet realized that some of our customers can only afford to purchase data once a month, so they introduced a 5GB package that costs less than M99 on Econet Fibre/ADSL and M150 on mobile. Data can be increased for as little as M30 for 1GB. Econet also offers schools' data packages at the fifty percent discount. Currently, there is full Econet fibre coverage at Lesia, Thetsane East, Thetsane West, Lower Thetsane, Masowe 1,2,3,4, Maseru East, Maseru West, Florida, Arrival Centre, White City, Ha-Hoohlo, Moshoeshoe II, Stadium area, Sea Point and Hillview while all major towns have mobile data coverage on both 3G and 4G. Read more at <http://www.lestimes.com/econet-makes-internet-access-more-affordable/>





Cultures of Labor Action from the Streets of Maseru to New York

By Zachary Rosen

On the morning of August 9th, I awoke disoriented to the distant, muffled sound of song. Wiping the grogginess from my eyes, I thrust my heavy blanket towards the foot of the bed and was immediately enveloped by crisp highland air. The chill was a reminder I had chosen to trade the sticky summer heat of New York City for the formidable winter of Lesotho, the kingdom nation in Southern Africa where annual snowfall is not uncommon. I was in Lesotho for The New School summer session to do research for my thesis, which is focused on the construction of national identity in Lesotho through the establishment of a new national museum. I had chosen to research the museum in Lesotho based on the connections I had established in the country over a number of years; first through Peace Corps service, and more recently through collaborative co-management of a literature festival there called Ba re e ne re.

The singing was getting louder.

Kicking on my slippers, I had a flashback to earlier in the week. I was walking down Kingsway, the central thoroughfare of Lesotho's capital city Maseru, when I spotted a poster of the Sunday Express newspaper that had announced,

I wondered if the singing could be from the striking workers. In order to keep my expenses low over the summer, I had eschewed the conveniently located neighborhoods of near central Maseru and instead rented a modest apartment situated a ways out from town. The area I ended up in was called Masowe 1, which is nestled amongst a series of peripheral suburbs (including Masowe 2 and Masowe 3) to the south of Maseru. Nearby, a little down the road from my house, was a massive industrial complex. I knew that within the compound sat a cluster of factories dedicated to the production of textiles and lightbulbs.

The singing blended into chanting, then flowed back to singing as it marched closer.

Not wanting to miss the activity, I threw on my clothes as fast as I could and burst out into the street just in time to see a mass of several hundred people passing by, claiming both sides of the road as their own. Assessing the situation, I saw the crowd appeared to be mostly working class women dressed in ordinary clothes. This strengthened my theory about the group representing striking workers. I approached the group with cautious excitement, and asked a marcher if this was indeed a factory strike. She quickly confirmed, proclaiming, "We are striking because we need chelete."

Chelete means money in Sesotho and factory workers in Lesotho do not earn a lot of it for their long hours and repetitive tasks. Nearly all large factories are owned and operated by Taiwanese and Chinese people who have settled in Lesotho over the course of the last couple decades. Navigating a landscape of trade agreements in the globally competitive textile industry, factories have ended up in Lesotho to circumvent national production quotas (through what was the Multi-Fiber Arrangement) and benefit from trading preferences such as those currently offered by the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). While the factories have created jobs, the wages they offer are hardly livable. At the time of the strike, factory workers could earn a minimum wage of about 1238 Maloti (about \$85) per month for full time work, where full-time can mean 12-hours shifts, 6 days a week.

Having recently gone on strike myself as a student worker at The New School in May, I was filled with a sense of solidarity as I joined the crowd in marching towards Maseru. Women ululating and singing while waving freshly broken boughs reminded me of forming picket lines with colleagues in the Student Employees of the New School union (SENS-UAW) on 5th Avenue, 12th street and 16th street, sharing protest chants and waving placards. Chatting with more factory workers as we marched I learned that key motivations for the strike were the recently announced taxi fare and utility cost hikes. All this while the Prime Minister of Lesotho, Thomas Thabane, had yet to fulfill a campaign promise to raise wages to a new minimum of 2020 Maloti per month.

Marching onwards, the workers continued to block all lanes of traffic, leaving large rocks on the road in their wake and ensuring the memory of their actions would be remembered even beyond their presence. The disruption elicited mixed reactions of support and frustration from various drivers meeting them on the road. Every time a car was forced to reverse and turn around, a roaring cheer would roll through the crowd. After progressing a couple of miles towards town, a police van materialized ahead. Officers disembarked with helmets and large rifles to establish a police line and derail the march. I shifted to the margins among the onlookers from the surrounding neighborhood and observed as the workers, unfazed, boldly pushed the line. Women were the bravest, some theatrically throwing themselves to the ground and rolling beyond the threshold established by the police. Fortunately, the police showed some measure of restraint and did not rush to physical violence. However, as more time passed with the workers refusing to back down, the police officers lost their patience and eventually fired tear gas into the sky. The loud eruption of the gas canisters leaving their chambers and the arches of their descent caused the crowd to scatter with people running down narrow dirt paths and through yards adjacent to

the main road. The police held the street for a little while, and then boarded their van to drive away. Evidently, workers in another area of the city needed responding to as well.



(Continued on page 9)




Cultures of Labor Actions (continued from page 8)

Before too long several modest sized groups of workers had coalesced again with chanting and protest songs alternating afresh. I joined them as they penetrated further towards the city center. Soon we arrived at the open sports fields where workers from the Thetsane industrial were confronting a new police line. Rocks covered all the roads and black smoke rose from burning tires in several places. The workers demanded to be heard and they had been successful in bring their factory floors and many of Maseru's streets to a standstill.

Yet, more pops of tear gas followed, helicopters flew by overhead and larger military vehicles were spotted in the distance. A light rain fell as the workers dispersed in clusters into the neighborhoods, still singing. I finally broke away and headed the rest of the way into town, noting that burned tires metamorphose into charred piles of thin elegant rings.

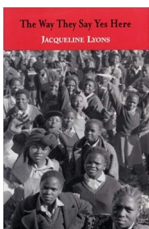
I followed the subsequent reporting of the strikes in local newspapers very closely. It was remarkable to observe the political slant of the various papers by seeing how the strike actions were characterized. In some articles the workers were described as riotous mobs intent on destroying property, while in others the meaningful fight for a living wage was acknowledged. Regardless, the stikes had made an impression in the public consciousness and forced the government to address the workers' demands. Initially, the government seemed prepared to take steps to officially raise the minimum wage to 2000 Maluti, yet soon backpedaled and delayed making changes. The inaction ignited further waves of protest over the next few days. Negotiations continued however. By late August the workers had won, with the government agreeing to the 2000 Maluti minimum wage. Though still a modest monthly income, the 62% raise that came as a direct result of sustained collective action from the workers is a remarkable achievement.

In Lesotho, the economic environment for industries tends to be very fragile. Concerns are common about the possible departure of foreign investors who provide many formal jobs in the country. Especially in the globally competitive textile industry where there are many service providers internationally and consumers are very price sensitive, businesses threaten the importance of keeping wages low and productivity high for retaining jobs. Yet the Lesotho strikes showed that through powerful collective action, workers can be successful in improving their conditions.

Reflecting on the strikes in Maseru and the campaign for the first student worker union contract at the New School, I thought about how much labor struggles have in common. It was beautiful to witness the unique, but resonant cultures of social action in each place. From the singing, to the marching, to the symbols and messages of protest, in each place workers stood together to advocate for their demands. In each place large institutions balked and tried to beguile their communities, yet ultimately, in each place the collective resilience of workers has been and will be triumphant. 

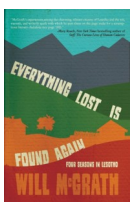
Winter Reading Suggestions

Amazon donates a percentage of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to FOL.
Support FOL by starting your shopping at <http://www.friendsoflesotho.org>



Lyons, Jacqueline (2004). *The Way They Say Yes Here*. Hanging Loose Press.

Poetry. "Mallarme's vision of a poesie pure came from his work as a translator. It was the slippage of arbitrary and always transient words, their unstable motion, which freed them from the deadening trap of easy or obvious association to leave them energized and "pure." A time spent in Africa provided this kind of estrangement for Jacqueline Lyons, changing and charging her relation to her own language by giving her another. Now, in her first collection of poems, Lyons reveals a pure accuracy of gaze in an essential, necessary poetry. Her compassion and understanding are exemplary - and deeply moving. These poems are completely unsentimental, constantly testing language against the physical facts of the actual, miraculous and heart-breaking world." Lyons was born in Wisconsin, received her MFA from Colorado State University, and is completing a PhD at the University of Utah. These poems grow out of a three year stint in the Peace Corps, where she served in Lesotho, South Africa.



McGrath, W. (2018). *Everything Lost Is Found Again: Four Seasons in Lesotho*. Dzanc Books.

Funny and heartfelt, this amalgamation of memoir and essay collection tells the story of twenty months the author spent in Lesotho. There he finds a spirit of joyful absurdity and resolve, surrounded by people who take strangers' hands as they walk down the road, people who—with sweetest face—drop the dirtiest jokes in the southern hemisphere. But Lesotho is also a place where shepherds exact Old Testament retribution, where wounded pride incites murder and families are devastated by the AIDS epidemic. Driven by a spirit of openhearted cultural exchange in the style of Bill Bryson's *In a Sunburned Country* and Alexandra Fuller's *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, Will McGrath's *Everything Lost Is Found Again* is a love-drunk ballad to Lesotho, infusing humor and heart into pop ethnography.

Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/>

Have a favorite book of interest to our readers you would like to share? Send to tara.m.browne@gmail.com



METSOALLE ea LESOTHO

Be an FOL Member for FREE!

Aparna Jayaraman, RPCV Education, 2011-13, aparnaay@gmail.com

Hello, Bakhotsi! Your friendly FOL Membership Committee Chair Aparna here.

As mentioned in the last FOL newsletter, Friends of Lesotho stopped collecting the mandatory \$15 yearly membership dues starting in January 2017.

What do FOL's free dues mean for you?

If you're currently a member of Friends of Lesotho:

You don't have to do anything. Your membership automatically renewed.

If you used to be a member but are no longer a member:

Take two minutes to fill out the updated [membership form online](#).

If you've never been a member:

What are you waiting for? There's never been a better time to start getting involved!

With membership fees in the rear view mirror, we need your help more than ever to continue doing the amazing work Friends of Lesotho does in Lesotho.

Amazon will donate money to Friends of Lesotho when you shop. Join Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com) and add Friends of Lesotho as a beneficiary. Remember to use Amazon Smile when you shop on-line.

Get involved with one of the many committees in FOL.

Donate generously to our many projects, using the [form online](#).

And Remember:

We couldn't do and support the work, have the impact, and save the lives we do without your financial support. Your contributions support our work in:

- ◆ HIV/AIDS
- ◆ Orphanages
- ◆ Tuition Assistance including Memorial Scholarships
- ◆ The Morija Museum
- ◆ Peace Corps Volunteer Projects
- ◆ Community Development Projects
- ◆ Other types of projects as new opportunities arise

We work because you give.

Whether it's \$5 or \$5,000, all donations help us reach further and save more lives and because we're a registered 501(c)3, your donation is tax deductible!

If you'd like to give, please go to: <http://www.friendsoflesotho.org/donate/>



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Newsletters Past and Present—The FOL Newsletter, *Metsoalle ea Lesotho* is posted on our website homepage (<http://friendsoflesotho.org>) 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.

Submit Newsletter Articles—Pass on RPCV updates. Recommend a Mt. Kingdom movie, music, book or Website. Share new or old photos. Been to Lesotho lately? Share it!

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

Tara Browne, FOL Newsletter Coordinator tara.m.browne@gmail.com



Ways YOU Can Support FOL

Help FOL with your expertise and time!

If you've always wondered how you could give a little more to FOL, now is the chance to volunteer your time, special skills, and enthusiasm!

Board Service: The members of the Board of Directors of Friends of Lesotho are elected based on their ability and willingness to contribute to the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives. Nominations are welcome year round, elections are held at the Annual Meeting in October, and directors serve for two-year terms.

Committees and Task Forces: FOL members who do not wish to make a long-term commitment to the board are encouraged to join standing committees, or work on special projects which match their skills and interests to the needs of the organization.

Learn more at <http://www.friendsoflesotho.org/how-to-support-fol/board-and-committee-service/>

Friends of Lesotho - 2018 Treasurer's Summary for Board:			November 18, 2018
<i>(Jan-2018 = Start of CY Accounts)</i>	9/6/2018	11/10/2018	Difference
Current Bank Balance (checking (1)):	\$7,476.83	\$10,714.23	\$3,237.40
Current Bank Balance (savings (2)):	\$33,566.50	\$33,588.95	\$22.45
Total (both accounts excluding Paypal pending)	\$41,043.33	\$44,303.18	\$3,259.85
2018 General / Project Fund Status:			
Total of all donations designated for projects listed below. See Membership/Donations Committee report for further breakout. Note - This amount reflects operating/project breakout assumed when deposits are made. These assumptions will occasionally be reconciled per project fund reports provided by the Membership Committee.			
	Amount in Fund (1)	Amount sent to Lesotho	Amount Pending Future Disbursement
Start Calendar Year (after EOY memb. db reconcile adjust) =	\$34,524.57		
Donations received year to date (1) =	\$18,386.07		
Totals	\$52,910.64	\$41,811.90	\$11,098.74
<i>Total difference from Prior report:</i>	<i>\$10,100.32</i>	<i>\$6,647.72</i>	<i>\$3,452.60</i>
(2) Breakout project cash sent (all fees under operating):		<i>\$41,811.90</i>	<i>= Total below</i>
Leratong Comm Ctr via Springfield Rotary Foundation - ck 172	1/12/2018	\$4,200.00	PCPP total breakout:
PCPP posting #1 - TAP, ACH	1/18/2018	\$315.36	\$22,044.90
PCPP posting #2 - Local HS project, ACH	2/11/2018	\$1,000.00	
PCPP posting #3 - Library multi room, ACH	2/11/2018	\$1,000.00	
PCPP posting #4 - school roof, ACH	2/11/2018	\$1,000.00	
PCPP posting #5 - Toilets R4us, ACH	2/11/2018	\$1,000.00	
PCPP posting #6 - Pre-school Library Project, ACH	4/10/2018	\$434.43	
PCPP posting #7 - HS Renov Project, ACH	4/10/2018	\$1,000.00	
Lesotho Nutrition Initiative (via Wittenberg U) - ck 174	5/30/2018	\$2,650.00	
God's Love Center (RISE) Grant - Wire	5/31/2018	\$7,492.00	
PCPP posting #8 - World Map and Projector Project	7/8/2018	\$787.72	
PCPP posting #9-21 - TAP Projects (13 total), ACH	7/11/2018	\$8,859.67	
Phelisanong Children's Center project wire	8/10/2018	\$5,425.00	
PCPP posting #22-37 - TAP Projects (16 total), ACH	10/25/2018	\$5,193.93	
PCPP posting #38 - TAP Project (1 total), ACH	10/27/2018	\$798.62	
PCPP posting #39 - TAP Project (1 total), ACH	11/1/2018	\$424.14	
PCPP posting #40 - TAP Project (1 total), ACH	11/10/2018	\$231.03	
2018 Operating Expense Status:			
Current Cash in Accounts (as above, excluding Paypal pending):		\$44,303.18	
General / Project Fund (per above)		-\$11,098.74	
Life Membership Fund (reserve)		-\$23,361.10	
Available Operating Reserve =		\$9,843.34	
Unused Expenses in 2018 Budget -		\$4,931.66	
Current Cash Reserve (after budget) =		\$4,911.68	excludes unspent budget
(Total operating cash expenses, incl. pass thru):		\$643.34	
(Total operating inkind expenses to date):		\$42.00	operating expenses only



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Fourth Quarter 2018
Newsletter



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