

FOL Reunion

by Bob Kerr

Last fall's reunion was a truly wonderful event. Attended by Americans who had served in Lesotho from the 60's through the 80's, Basotho now living in the States, and Basotho temporarily here, a time of sharing and remembering was enjoyed by all. Robin Van der Mei won the award for best effort, flying in from Los Angeles at the last moment.

The events began on Saturday at the home of 'Ntate Letsie, Embassy Charge d'Affairs. 80 FOL members registered for the weekend's events. Artwork and paintings from Lesotho were displayed and throughout the afternoon videos were played of Lesotho, the FOL supported Trickleup Program, and a very moving video called "Sounds of Miners," which portrayed the strains on the lives of Basotho migrant workers in the Apartheid environment of South Africa.

Outside were series of discussions led by FOL President Scott Brumburgh. Scott began by outlining to the group the FOL activities through the years seeking guidance for future activities. Next, Professor Bob Edgar forthrightly described the current political environment in Lesotho, tracing the relationship between the King, General Lekhanya - leader of the Military Council, and South Africa. Two striking points of Edgar's presentation were his perception of coziness between Lekhanya and South Africa as compared to the more antagonistic position of the King, and the strength of Lekhanya vis a vis

the King as was evidenced in the incident surrounding Lekhanya's implication in the murder of an Agriculture student last year. Lastly, there was a debate regarding the efficacy of FOL supporting sanctions legislation which culminated in a vote against FOL taking a position on sanctions. I argued for sanctions, stressing that the anti-sanctions arguments date back to the 60's and that all Americans who have witnessed apartheid must speak out on this issue. Bill Dunn argued the anti-sanctions position indicating that his experience was different from mine and that FOL must not compromise it's "Friends Of" orientation by involving itself in controversial issues.

That evening the embassy hosted a yummy and packed independence celebration at Ambassador Van Tonder's residence. Of course, the party ended with dancing into the wee hours. When the group split up the old timers (about 20 FOL members and spouses from the 60's) went to a restaurant to reminisce and the youngsters went to a disco and danced even more.

The weekend came to a close the next day with a picnic in Rock Creek Park - John Hollister (RPCV 87-89) working the barbecue. Scott handed out some awards, including flowers to Amy Friedheim, RPCV 81-83, the primary weekend organizer and the group pledged another reunion in the near future, although certainly not next year. Later, a group of volunteers not wanting the fun to end gathered to show slides and eat pizza. All who participated are still basking in the afterglow of a fine event.

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President's Column

by Scott Brumburgh

The October Conference and Mokete produced two membership recommendations for 1990. I want to bring you up to date on these and other actions taken by the Board of Directors at its February 11th meeting in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Scholarship Program

Perhaps it was the eloquent case made at the conference on behalf of Basotho students by Thabang Toloane. Thabang is a Mosotho student who has been studying in Gainesville, Florida. He has received financial support from Lesotho RPCV Caroline Richardson and her family, but is currently experiencing a shortfall. After hearing his personal story and learning of the problems other Basotho students have had through our pilot Lesotho Students in America Program, the membership passed a motion to set up a scholarship program to assist Basotho students studying in the U.S.

Three members agreed at the FOL picnic the following day to establish the scholarship committee: Caroline Richardson, Mike Meenen and Mark Breen.,

The FOL Board subsequently decided to start this project in the following way:

- . Set up criteria for selecting qualified students
- . Select one student to receive a \$1,000 scholarship for 1990.
- . Write to Peace Corps/Lesotho and other possible Lesotho-oriented organizations to see what role they can play in terms of administering a scholarship fund for students in Lesotho or providing in-kind contributions for schools.

In recent weeks a number of unsolicited requests have been received which will go to the committee:

1. Sekhonyana Molapo seeks a scholarship in computer programming using Pascal or COBOL languages;
2. Michael Mabathoana seeks a scholarship toward a graduate degree in agricultural mechanization;
3. Gloria Mofolo seeks a scholarship to continue her studies in the U.S. (Note: we have tried unsuccessfully to reach Gloria at the number she left us -- (305) 893-9556. If anyone knows how to reach her please have her contact us once again).
4. Thabo Maphela seeks a scholarship to study computer programming in the U.S.

I am asking any FOL member experienced with scholarship programs or who has ideas and would like to pass them on to the committee to please contact me at the FOL address.

FOL on Political Issues

The matter of whether or not FOL should take a public anti-Apartheid stand was debated at the conference. This was the organization's first major discussion on the bounds of the group's basically anti-political orientation. Without reviewing the pro's and con's of this particular issue, I will report that the membership present voted 16-2 with no abstentions to recommend FOL refrain from endorsing a pro-sanctions position

paper sent to appropriate U.S. Congress committees already signed by numerous RPCV groups around the country.

At the Board meeting, we reviewed this issue and voted unanimously to support the conference vote. However it was also decided that this did not necessarily preclude us as an organization from taking positions on this or other issues in the future providing a clear FOL consensus was achieved.

We will use a group headed up by Doug Mayo in Minnesota to now make a preliminary review on FOL participation in political or other activist programs related to Southern Africa.

Other issues that were discussed included:

1. FOL will maintain an informal relationship with the Embassy and will consider cosponsoring programs promoting self-help and social links between Lesotho and the United States with the Embassy on an ad hoc basis;
2. The newsletter will be published every four months with deadlines of April 1, August 1 and December 1; and
3. The FOL steering committee will henceforth meet for an extensive weekend meeting once every 3 months as opposed to the previous system of short ad hoc basically monthly meetings.

Still other issues receiving cursory attention included expanding membership, continued efforts regarding hospitality; the medical textbooks project; Peace Corps Partnership; the Trickle Up program; marketing handicrafts and expanding the board. Copies of the minutes can be obtained from Ted Hochstadt.

Trickle Up

by Caroline Richardson

Last year, Friends of Lesotho gave \$500 to a development program called Trickle Up. This year, we hope to be able to give another \$500, and possibly more. Since the money comes from your dues, you have a right to know how Trickle Up puts it to use.

The Trickle Up Program (TUP) has been around for 10 years and in that time it has assisted people in 83 different countries to start over 10,000 small businesses. The basic approach is to provide a small amount of startup cash (usually \$100) to an individual or a small group of villagers who have an idea for starting a small business. In order to be awarded a TUP grant, the prospective entrepreneurs must first draft a detailed proposal for the business with the assistance of a TUP volunteer coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for assisting the villagers with basic business planning skills, such as budgeting, keeping accounts, and marketing. During the planning process, provisions are made for reinvesting a percentage of the initial profits back into the business in order to insure that it will be a viable long-term operation.

TUP has been active in Lesotho with 26 Coordinators who have helped to start over 120 businesses. TUP does not allow contributors to earmark funds for a specific country or region as the process would substantially increase their overhead.

TUP has organized a very efficient and simple method of keeping track of the success of their sponsored businesses. Each entrepreneur is required to fill out a very brief statement of profits and expenses three months after they get the initial installment of their grant. The data is collected and analyzed on a personal computer and yields a surprising amount of information. According to a recent TUP newsletter, the two most common types of TUP businesses involve producing and selling vegetables (12% of all businesses supported by TUP), and raising chickens (7%). The most profitable types of businesses which TUP has helped to get off the ground involve selling cookware, embroidery or needle work, and leather goods.

To get more information about TUP, write to Trickle Up Program, Inc, 54 Riverside Drive, PHE, New York, NY 10024. If you are interested in donating more money to TUP, you can send donations over and above your membership free to FOL with a note indicating that you want the extra money to go straight to TUP, and FOL will add it to our donation.

Dust Devils

The noise.
Never has it rung so loud,
not in my ears.
The window panes
became chattering teeth
in the furtive, frightened house-smile.
The rippled roof
desperately clings,
nails digging deep
into wall-flesh.
The moaning foundation drones
in this harmony of warning.

Outside
the fallow field trembles.
The parched powder of topsoil
whips into waves of dust,
and the Devils of August soar.
Earth born, wind borne spirits
pierce the pale sky,
as the earth exhales
its long-held
breath of Winter.

When the dust settles
from that first gust
the earth resumes
its rhythmic breathing,
blowing gentle puffs of green
from the winter-brown ground.
And as the green
bursts to yellow and pink

I think:
I have seen this all before.
But never,
never have I heard its breathing.

I first heard my own breathing
when I lay close enough
to someone else
to know they heard it too.
Maybe
I am close enough
to the earth
to be deafened
by the sound of
my own breathing.

**-Kathy Sheerin
(RPCV Lesotho, '87)**

*July 10 is the deadline
for submitting articles or tidbits
to the August 1 newsletter,
which will include an in depth
analysis of Lesotho's current
political situation*

*Y'all contribute
now!!!*

Life After Lesotho for the Recently Returned

by Caroline Richardson

Forrest Dylan Johnson was born at 5:55 a.m. on February 9th in Knoxville, Tennessee to Wendy (RPCV Lesotho '88) and Greg Johnson (RPCV Lesotho '87).

Marriage madness continues with the wedding of Cindy Delveccio and Matt Grady (both RPCV's Lesotho '88) and Ron Ferris (RPCV Lesotho '87) to someone we do not know.

Scott Jensen (RPCV Lesotho '88) was awarded the Schriver Peace Workers Award and is currently studying at the Georgetown University - Kennedy Institute of Ethics.

Odds and Ends

by Bob Kerr

Mr. Jerry Simmons, 4049 Ross Park Drive, San Jose, Ca. 95118 is looking for a penpal in Lesotho who is interested in world events, politics and history.

In May the FOL board will consider a request to provide latex examination gloves and sutures to St. Joseph's Hospital in Roma. For only \$90 we could provide the hospital 2,000 latex gloves so that they will not have to reuse the one they have.

It has been reported throughout the press that on March 11, 1990, Major General Justin Lekhanya sent King Moshoeshoe II into exile in Britain for his refusal to fire and arrest four members of the ruling military council who were accused by Lekhanya of insubordination.

This year's National Conference of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers will be held in Eugene, Oregon. Write to West Cascade RPCV's, P.O. Box 5462, Eugene, Or. 97405, if you wish to attend.

Linda Gray has replaced Timothy Carroll as the new Executive Director of the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Christmas Party

by Bob Kerr

Despite the energy put into October's reunion, volunteers in the Washington area couldn't bear to see a Christmas pass without a seasonal Mokete. Accordingly, about 20 FOL members gathered at the home of Terry and Mantai Murry to celebrate. There was gorging and dancing - who could ask for more. The ambassador left behind two cases of beer and Pat Halladay (RPCV 82-89) pledged to visit Terry at the earliest possible opportunity.

Morena Moshoeshe II

by Caroline Richardson

A wise old Mosotho villager once told me "There are no politics in Lesotho." The gleam in his eye told me that he knew better. The growing rift between Major General Metsing Lekhanya, chairman of the ruling Military Council, and King Moshoeshe II, executive head of the government, has led to a quiet but politically significant shift in power in recent weeks.

Last month, the king was stripped of all legislative and executive power by Gen. Lekhanya. According to Gen. Lekhanya, there was a faction of the Military Council which "harboured secret ambitions for unbridled personal authority and power." The king's association with this rebel faction is ambiguous but the implication is that he was being drawn into the power struggle on their behalf. On March 10th, the king left Lesotho for the United Kingdom. Reports vary as to whether he has gone on a personal holiday, on a brief sabbatical or into exile.

Gen. Lekhanya is often accused of bending too easily to the will of the South African government and there is a growing belief that he is able to maintain power only with the strong support of Pretoria. With his recent moves against the popular king, Gen. Lekhanya risks alienating whatever support he did have from among the Basotho people. It remains to be seen how the new government will respond to pressure to remove existing restrictions on political freedom. According to our XVI correspondent in Maseru, there has been little outward sign of political turmoil in the capital city. Sources: 1) "Lesotho: Of Coups and Commoners", Elizabeth Elderedge, Southern Africa Report, Nov. 1989. 2) Foreign Broadcast Information Service, March 12, 1990.

Book Announcements

by Caroline Richardson

The Peace Corps: An Annotated Bibliography, Robert B. Marks Ridinger, (GK Hall Co., Boston). Mr. Ridinger served as assistant Librarian at the National University of Lesotho from 1976 to 1980 with the Peace Corps. His new bibliography is a list of more than 1400 sources on the history of the Peace Corps, including books, newspapers, periodical articles, videotapes, memoirs, dissertations, research monographs and government documents. The book is available from G.K. Hall, 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, Ma. 02111 for \$35.

Blue Taxis: Stories of Africa, Eileen Drew, (Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis). Eileen Drew, a RPCV who served in Zaire, was awarded the Milkweed Editions 1989 National Fiction Award for their new collection of short stories about Africa. The book is available from Milkweed Editions, P.O. Box 3226, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Wedding of the Waters, Craig Carrozzi, (Southern Trails Publishing, San Francisco). Craig Carrozzi served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Columbia and has traveled extensively throughout Central and South America. His book tells the story of his adventures while traveling through the Amazon. It is available from Southern Trails Publishing, P.O. Box 34-70009, San Francisco, Ca. 94134.