



## Saving and Enriching Lives in Ethiopia

**Ross' Piece** *Recession is a word on everyone's lips but all WellWishers supporters are urged to please maintain their level of support. Just think how much worse it is for those in Ethiopia.*

Thank you to the 2 ladies who donated part of their Mums' inheritance to fund a well. The plaque at that village will ensure their Mums' memory is commemorated.

And thanks to all those who chose to make a difference by buying Christmas Gift cards. About 90 cards were bought, that's \$5,000, nearly ONE well!.

Due to space limitations, extracts from the Impact Assessment Report will be deferred until next issue of the Newsletter.

For those who made donations in December and January, please don't worry about your receipts. They will come! It's the busiest time of the year for our receipting partner.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Spreading the Word

Many of you ask "what can I do to help?" If you could encourage just 2 people to register for the Newsletter [no obligation to donate], that would be terrific. Please see what you can do to spread the word about Wellwishers.

#### Order Gift Cards



*Use them for birthdays, anniversaries, etc. The \$55 price provides an average family with clean water for the rest of their lives.*

**TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

#### A Supporter's Story

In October, Marena, an 11 year old, visited rural Tigray villages with Ross, Marianne & Robyn. Her story is on the website under "News"



#### Tourist View



Prue & Greg have just returned from their first visit to Ethiopia. Read about their delightful experiences over the page.

#### Canberra Supporters

A non-fundraising getting-to-know-you dinner and an exciting 12 hr Jazz Festival are being organised for early April. See enclosed flyers (For Canberra supporters only).

#### Donor Offers \$60,000

A Friend is matching donations in 2008/09 on a \$1 for \$1 basis up to \$60,000. Take advantage by donating now.



**All Donations Over \$2.00 are TAX**

### RELAX IN QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND and KNOW YOU'RE HELPING ETHIOPIANS OBTAIN CLEAN WATER

**WellWishers announce the 2ND annual RAFFLE!**

**The prize? A Trip for 2 to QUEENSTOWN.**

**Includes 6 nights in Queenstown and 7 days Car Hire from Christchurch. (See attached flyer for more information.)**

**A significant prize! We need your help to SELL enthusiastically, so we cover costs & make enough for ONE well. ORDER generously knowing you made a difference.**

**\$2 Per Ticket or \$5 for 3 Tickets. Ensure you order enough books for yourselves and for your friends. Contact Ross now for prompt delivery of tickets.**

### Turning 'Wine Into Water'

What a fantastic thing - for less than the cost of a glass of wine [\$5.50] you can download 3 beautifully arranged classics performed by Tony King. Go to [www.winemusic.biz](http://www.winemusic.biz).

Thank you Tony - ONE person is making a difference.

### Join Ross in Ethiopia - May 2009!

The Centre for Social Response is organising a trip to Ethiopia in May. Ross will be one of the programme's facilitators. See



flyer for more information. You will visit places rarely seen by tourists, spending time in remote rural villages and talking with the locals about their everyday life, hardships and aspirations.

Ross did a similar trip to India years back with the same organisation and it changed his life. It is a trip not to be missed. Come & join Ross in May.

### 'Swinging Bridge' Wine Offer

Purchase affordable wines (incl. Best Shiraz at NSW Wine Awards & Best Single Vineyard Chardonnay, at Melbourne Wine Show) and assist Wellwishers.

The family-owned Swinging Bridge Estate from Central Ranges, NSW, will donate \$30 to Wellwishers for every case ordered online at [www.swingingbridge.com.au](http://www.swingingbridge.com.au)

Please mark ALL your orders Wellwishers to ensure WellWishers benefits from this very generous offer.

**Wellwishers' supporters, Prue Sobers and Greg Nicholson visited Ethiopia in October and here, Prue gives us a small sample of some of her impressions.**

I thought I was prepared; but not for this! As the minivan hurtles down the centre of the long, straight road to Bahir Dar, the verges are teeming with people surging in the same direction. It is a balmy Saturday morning – market day – a month after the big rains, and the fields are green as new peas. In spite of the agreeable setting and the excitement of having just arrived for the first time in Ethiopia, I sit stunned and unable to lift my camera. These are not the shining faces I have seen gazing out at me from photographs of rural Ethiopia. The villagers who stream in their hundreds by the roadside here, are in drab, dirt-coloured rags and as we pass, I am struck by the pervading air of cheerlessness and fleeting glances that edge on despair. Nonetheless, there is urgency in the step of every man, woman and child as they herd or carry their animals and goods to market. A young woman clutches a live, flapping chicken at her breast; a boy, stick in hand, runs with an ox; an old man, draped in a shawl, paces through the throng with his walking pole as two women, bent at right angles labour under sacks of charcoal. The abject poverty of so many en mass is both shocking and confronting.

But one cannot generalise about the human condition in Ethiopia. Just as we do not experience the appalling, famine-stricken districts of the south which currently affect some six or seven percent of Ethiopia's 80 million population, as we later explore the highlands, certainly we see poverty, but do not again witness the unequivocal desolation of those on the road to Bahir Dar.

The northern highlands are not only exquisitely beautiful, the journey gives up a trove of culturally-rich and historic places, filled with warm and earnest people: Lake Tana and the Blue Nile Falls, the castle city of Gondar, the breathtaking Simien Mountains, Aksum, the historic and sacred township of tombs and fourth century obelisks, and Mekele, from where my husband and I visit three sponsored children, and see the hand-dug wells and watershed management program through Wellwishers.



But it is out on the open road where the unravelling colours of the landscape and the people in their habitats captivate us most. Here, we find giant purple boulders lounging among patchwork quilts of amber

and green, and haystacks sleeping, silken and ordered in the sun. Good roads or bad, winding or straight, life and industry are everywhere: people working, people walking – through open country, in the mountains, along gully ridges and the well-beaten tracks, and at the edges of the road.

Across the fields, a man leads his wife and baby on a horse as the mother shelters her child under a large, black umbrella. In another direction, a teenage boy streaks across the landscape hunched over the handlebars of his bike, his bright red shirt billowing in the wind as he weaves through a small herd of cattle, and further on, two small boys marshal kid goats among the acacia trees and disappear into a stand of eucalypts.



Hours on, as the road unwinds, the slopes become a sea of wild lavender and yellow New Year flower spilling down to meet broad bean crops and bright green stretches of teff, the grain of the traditional sourdough flat bread, *injera*. A woman and her child trek home across the way, under the burden of their jerrycans, and later, as we slow on the outskirts of a town, a boy runs grinning beside the van, balancing two plastic bags of limes on his palms – but, alas, we cannot buy from everyone. The road ferries us into open country again, and as we stop to take photographs, a teenage girl is suddenly beside the van, smiling a shy welcome. Her name is *Shemelah* and she agrees to a photograph. As we draw away, we wave to one other like long lost friends until she is out of sight.

At 3,800 metres, we are above the clouds. Here, the plunging escarpments are not for the faint-hearted. We pull up and lie at the edge of a precipice to film the drama of the flat-topped monoliths of the Hawaza Mountains that guard the surrounding valleys. We learn that caves lie under the escarpment where the critically endangered ibex and gelada baboons seek refuge at night from leopards and hyenas. The light here is perfect; the sun, warm on our backs and above, a raven soars on the thermals and swoops and glides to the trees. In the stillness, its weird, throaty voice wafts haltingly on the air, like a cork twisted from a wine bottle. Below us, the foreground shadows give way to chequered patterns of lemon and green in the distance, and a path, slender as thread, takes the eye to clusters of conical-roofed huts where several villages sit among the hills.

We have barely begun our journey, but already we know we will be lured helplessly back to this exotic and mystical land in the course of time. There is a spirit and a rhythm to the natural order of life in

**Please note** that Donations are to be in favour of "WellWishers" and we take advantage of the before mentioned \$1 for \$1 extra donation. posted to the address at the bottom of this Newsletter. This ensures About 95% of funds raised go to the actual Wells projects. There are

**DONATIONS:** \$6,000 provides 1 Well - The Friend's 1:1 donation (up to limit of \$60,000) gives 2 wells, helping about 1,000 people

Please tick Square ONLY if interim receipt is required (you automatically receive one later from our Australian partner)

Enclosed is my Donation of \$ ..... (Cheque/MO attached - in favour of *WellWishers*)

Address (incl. postcode) .....

OR: Debit my Visa or MasterCard - Please CIRCLE your card type (automatic periodical payments available)

Name on Card: ..... Signature: .....

Card Number: ..... Expiry Date: ...../..... CCV .....(last 3 numbers on back of Card)

Name for Receipt Purposes if different to bank account or card name: .....

OR: You Can Donate Online (Secure Site): [www.ourcommunity.com.au/wellwishers](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/wellwishers)