

Chapter 9, Somalia

Africa Beckons

During the period 1961-

63 EMU's College of Education was involved in into education needs in Somalia and in 1963 signed a contract with the United States Agency for International Development and the newly formed Somali Republic to establish a teacher training facility in Somalia. The

project was to set up a secondary level program to train teachers for that nation's elementary schools. The first EMU team went to Somalia in 1963. This was Eastern's first overseas contract. It was to be followed by one in Swaziland and one in Yemen. The Chief of Party was Stan Gez, former Dean of EMU's College of Education. The team included Edward Goings of the Mathematics Department, Bob Robinson of the Education Department and several others. John Metler of Ed. Psych was a member of the second team arriving in Somalia in 1966. I was approached to apply for a science position but I couldn't interest the family in a sojourn in Africa. Bonny had a couple more years of high school and it was not a good time to pull her out. There was no viable secondary education in-country in Somalia.

But when the 'third team' was being formed in 1967, things looked a bit better for undertaking a tour in Africa. Bonny would graduate from high school that spring and enter Michigan State in the fall. Her family's leaving her alone in the United States was a severe inconvenience to say the least, but it seemed a viable move. In hindsight, stranding her alone may have been more of a hardship than we realized. Butch was enthusiastic about living overseas right from the start. When some EMU staff interviewed the family in connection with our selection for the team we came across as being able to survive and be productive in a foreign culture. And indeed we were. Our summers attending National Science Foundation institutes had accustomed us to long stays away from home, albeit for periods much shorter than the two-year contract involved in the Somalia project.

A problem for me in leaving the country was Mom's rapidly failing health. We decided to go anyway. Lucille and I let Mom think that the trip was just another summer visit to a campus in the States as we had often done before. The 'problem' was solved in a most awful way. Mom passed away, a victim of stomach cancer, before we left. This was the first of several deaths that were to occur before we got back to the United States. While we were in Somalia Bette's Dad, Jim Miller, and both my Brother Frank and Sister Lucille passed away. Communications were so poor that we did not know of these deaths for days after their occurrence. Bonny represented the family at her Grandad's funeral. Other family events we



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missed out on were niece Nancy's marriage to Jim Bardeen and Bonny's first marriage, this one to Raymond Richmond.

We put the house on Jay Street in Ypsilanti in the hands of a realtor to rent out during our absence. The project paid for storage of household goods, and two shipments of goods to Somalia—one by surface and a smaller one by airfreight. Our flights were economy class but we got chits for a first class luggage allowance. We turned the latter into 'unaccompanied baggage' which gave us a greater weight allowance. It turned out that we never moved back into the Jay Street house.

The 'team' which left in late June 1967, included Lou Porretta, Chief of Party, with wife Betty and Leslie and Jeff; Vic Coco, Administrative Assistant, with wife and Cindy, Rick and Tommy. Bette and I saw the Porrettas and the Cocos off and then caught up with them in Washington, D.C. where we attended an orientation staged by, I assume, USAID. I recall there was a session with some role playing. A Maths Advisor was part of the team originally, a chap from one of the lab schools, but his wife turned up pregnant and he withdrew. As a result I served as Maths Advisor as well as Science for some 12 months of my first tour.

The 'Six-Day War' had erupted on the Egyptian-Israeli border just a couple months previously and things were still quite tense in the Middle-East. For some reason we landed at Aden and saw at least one bombed plane just off the runway. Fear of sabotage on international flights was real. British Tommies politely but firmly herded all passengers into a dirty, hot, airless building while the plane, including our luggage, was searched. We wondered what we'd gotten ourselves into but this was to be our only brush with military types until near the end of our tour in Africa three years later. Aboard the same plane were some Somali participants returning from course work at US schools under our project. They wanted to deplane at Aden for some reason but were not allowed to. One of these was Nuh Ahmed Osman whom we had met in the States. On arrival in Somalia Nuh was assigned as Principal at Burao Technical School established with German assistance. Years later he greeted me when several of us visited that school in the north of the republic.

By the time the Poretta team arrived the project was well along. A small campus had been established outside of Afgoi, maybe some 10-20 kilometers west of Magdiscio. The complex included a

Okay, these were spellings we used at the time for these places. As is the case with most nations in Africa and the world over, place names and their spellings change with time due to shifts in politics and changes in sovereignty. From now on, I'll try to use the current spellings if I can spot them. So, I should write "Afgoya" and "Mogadishu."

Like the others, this chapter has gone through many drafts. The current one is being supported by the final report of the Somali Project submitted by Stan Gex, EMU's Dean of International Studies, entitled *Eastern Michigan University in Somalia*, undated but probably written in 1970 or 71. Bob and Sue Henry secured a copy of the report from Lou Porretta and kindly sent it to me. And, a further note entered in 2006.

We got word from Betty, through Al Corn, that Lou passed a way on 26 Oct., 2005. He was 79..

rectangle of classrooms with external corridors, an ablutions building in the center (with Arab style toilets), a kitchen and dining room to one side, student dorms and some six or eight staff residences. Bette, Butch and I moved into one of the staff houses. These were one-story stone and stucco buildings with a kitchen, dining and living room in one block and a bath and sleeping quarters in another block with a small courtyard in between. The quarters were plain, open and quite pleasant. We inherited a houseboy with the residence who did most of the shopping and cooking and all of the cleaning and laundry. He boiled and filtered all our drinking water. As I remember this chap became a little too independent and sometime during our tour we replaced him with a young Somali named Abdi.

We had purchased a new car, a Fiat from a mail order place in New York and the project paid to ship it to Somalia. But we arrived long before it did and we purchased from the Moncurs a little Fiat 600. This was a vehicle much the size and shape of a VW bug. Casey Moncur was the Chief of Party of another USAID project, this one in agriculture, run by the University of Wyoming. The Moncurs were Mormons. Years later their daughter, Susan, become our daughter-in-law. The tiny Fiat served us for some weeks until our new car arrived. Ocean going vessels could not actually dock at Magadishu. Instead they had to anchor in the harbor and goods were off-loaded onto lighters. We wondered if they'd drop our car in the harbor because some cargo was indeed lost this way. When the new car arrived we sold the little one but some time later, after I had taught Butch to drive and he had obtained an international license, or so I thought, we bought the little 600 back and it provided transportation for Butch—not to mention a gaggle of young people that he hauled around.

NTEC

Our little campus outside Afgoy was sited at what was called the National Teacher Education Centre. NTEC became well known throughout the Nation. Pretty much coincident with the arrival of the Poretta team, however, the thrust of the project was changed. For sometime the Somali Ministry of Education had been trying to amend the contract to change it from a secondary level program to train elementary teachers to a tertiary program to qualify high school teachers. USAID and EMU finally agreed to this change in emphasis. By the time we left in 1970, the project had established, on the same campus, the College of Education at Afgoya. We were admitting our third batch of 'freshmen', students who had passed their 'O levels.' Heretofore, most highschool teachers in the Nation were expatriates or Somalis who had taken college work outside of the country. Before Somalia fell apart in the 80's, most high school teachers in the country had trained at our College of Education and many had taken work at EMU in Ypsilanti..



Minaret on
NTEC's Mosque

Perhaps the most striking feature of our campus was a beautiful little mosque and minaret. Somalia is, of course, a Moslem nation. Most all Somalis

are Moslems and many Islamic practices are enforced by the government. At least they were when Somalia had a government. There was, we understood, considerable discussion when the campus was built whether U.S. funds should be used to build a Moslem mosque but in the end this did happen. 'Separation of church and state,' is not a universally recognized tenet. The Somali president, Shermarke, (who was assassinated during our tenure in the country) would stop at our mosque to pray when driving by.

This shift in the academic level meant that the Somali staff needed to have at least baccalaureate degrees and preferably masters or beyond. As a part of the USAID funded project, our Somali colleagues, our 'counterparts,' were sent to the States for degrees. They were enrolled in a number of Stateside institutions although many of them came to Eastern. At first EMU profs did much of the teaching. In fact, if expat team members didn't carry a full load of classes, the Somalis would complain. After all, they were aware that we were being paid much higher salaries which meant to them we should do more of the work! Our mission, of course, was to work ourselves out of a job and be able to put the entire College into the hands of a permanent Somali staff. Success in this direction varied from department to department. Ed Goings and Richard Merrick, the previous maths advisors, had done an excellent job of making their counterparts willing and able to teach the maths courses. I played a role in establishing the maths curriculum but did very little maths teaching.

I did teach a number of the science courses at first. Having to teach biology was the worst part. But by my last year counterparts were doing almost all of the teaching. I established a very able Somali as science department head, the only department, I believe, in which this was the case. I think it was when I taught the general science course that I worked in a little astronomy. I remember carrying out one of my regular projects, assembling a true scale model of the solar system. I called it a 'grapefruit' model because I used a grapefruit to represent the sun and scaled everything to it, distances as well as the sizes of planets. The earth comes out a small speck and the whole thing, from sun at the center to outermost Pluto extends over a kilometer. This model is still not 'true' since it's flat and not three dimensional. I'd assign students to carry scale representations of the several planets and pace off an appropriate scale distance to position each. We'd never really completed the whole thing out to Pluto, but did enough to make the point. Somali students played their roles with gusto. It was Saturn, I think, who paced so far out he decided to visit his home kraal and I didn't see him for two days.

For the most part, the work was varied and fun. My main responsibility was to set up the science (and in the first twelve months or so, the maths) curriculum, teach the courses when no counterparts were available. But, I got into a lot of other areas. I became the advisor for the senior Somali who was the academic dean, helped him set up a system of record keeping, maintaining grade point averages for students and setting standards. John Metler and I spearheaded the student admissions activities. There



My biology lab. We had one microscope.

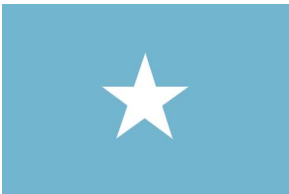
was great interest on the part of all Somalis who even 'sat' for their O Levels to enter the college at NTEC.

The school pattern in the nation mostly followed the old British system--Elementary grades were Grades 1 and 2, then Standards 1 through 5. Secondary was Forms I through IV, sometimes V. External exams were administered after Standard 5 and Form IV. The latter was the overseas version of the British 'O-Level' exam.

We had hundreds of applicants for each of the places in the next freshman class. The EMU team insisted on some sort of competitive admissions procedure. Left to its own devices, the Ministry of Education would place students on the basis of political or even tribal influence, or at least so we believed and with many examples to support our belief. Therefore we set a nationwide entrance examination based on the secondary curriculum. I persuaded the staff to interpret the test results on the basis of 'T Scores' rather than arbitrary raw score ranges. (Shades of Dr. Hiskey at Edinboro.) This seemed to me to be the only way of combining the results of several different tests into a combined criteria for selecting those to be admitted to the College. The tests submitted by the several departments varied greatly in difficulty. It seemed wrong to me that a high raw score in an easy test should carry as much weight as one in a difficult test. The tests administered were not standardized in any sense. Of course this meant I fell heir to doing all the statistics.

We administered the entrance exam to hundreds of applicants at various centers around the country. One year, probably 1968, John Metler and I flew to a school near Hargesya to administer the exam, an all-day affair. We flew in a tiny plane and I recall we had to bump a third passenger in order to be able to take our boxes of tests. And we flew the 'leg.' Somalia, you will note, is in the shape of a figure '7,' wrapping around the Ogadon region of Ethiopia. Relations between Somalia and Ethiopia were not good (they were to get worse) and Somali planes could not safely overfly Ethiopia. Instead of flying straight from Mogadishu to Hargesya we had to fly north-east, then turn and fly west.

There was some resentment among the youth of Somalia against the new American college and its policies and when John and I arrived at the test site we found a lot of students milling around. Many were there not to take the test but to harass those who were taking it. We got through it all with no serious incidents. The worst thing that happened was when the last test was being written it started to get dark and we discovered there were no lights in the school we were using. Light bulbs hung down in many rooms but there had been no electricity in the building for years.



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Somalia had at that time, still has I guess, border problems. When Somalia achieved independence in July, 1960, there was a merger of Somaliland, the former British Protectorate in the north, and Italian Somalia in the south. The flag that was adopted features a five pointed star. The points represent the five areas occupied by Somalis which was hoped would be included in the new republic--British Somaliland in the north around Hagesya, Italian

Somalia in the south around Magsishu, Djibouti, the Ogadon region of Ethiopia and the New Frontier District of Kenya. The last three are still in dispute. At the time Kenya was granted independence in 1963 a delegation from Somalia were in London to petition that government to grant the Ogadon and Haud regions of Ethiopia (see map above) to Somalia since they were occupied, at least seasonally, by Somalis. This delegation was led by Michael Mariano. His daughter, Catherine, was one of my math counterparts, a very able one. Mariano had been head of a political party called the National United Front and was a rather surprising choice for the European delegation since he was a Christian. The delegation reported that Great Britain promised that the border would be set recognizing Somali claims but when they returned to Magadishu, anticipating a hero's welcome, they learned that Ethiopian independence had been granted with no provision for settling the border dispute. Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Great Britain over the incident. The story we heard was that Somali government officials did not know how to accomplish the break and rang up the British Embassy for help. The document breaking relations was actually typed in the British Embassy and sent over to GOS for signature.

During our tenure in Somalia, British affairs in Somalia were handled by a chap with an office in the American Embassy. On the beach outside of Magadishu was the American Beach Club adjacent to the British Beach Club. During the years there were no Brits in Somalia, the Americans operated an Anglo-American Beach Club and removed a wall which had separated the front decks of the two clubs.

Through Catherine we became acquainted with the Marianos. The couple accepted an invitation to dinner one evening and Bette and the cook prepared a fine meal. (We had moved to Mogadishu by this time.) The couple never showed up and sent no word. The following night there was a knock at the door. "We couldn't make it last night but we're here now." I think Bette and I were in our bathrobes ready to go to bed. We learned when making appointments to specify 'American time' or 'Somali time' which could be any time at all.

Somalis are a handsome and intelligent people. They seemed to me more like 'black Arabs.' than African negroes. One area in which their cultural backgrounds left them somewhat deficient was in things mechanical. Growing up, for the most part, without access to motor cars, electricity, rooms that were rigidly rectangular and walls that were vertical, manufactured toys, telephones, kitchen appliances, etc., etc. made its impact on mechanical skills. Numerous incidents illustrate this cultural limitation.

We had metal shelving for the new library shipped in from the States. Somehow I fell heir to the job of placing and assembling this shelving. It was something that could not be simply turned over to the service staff.

There was a dining room and kitchen on the campus as the college was a boarding school and students took their meals on campus. At one point it was decided to lay tile in the kitchen. On the morning the work was to start Vic Coco went to check on operations and found a crew breaking up the cement floor with sledge hammers. Inquiry lead to the explanation. Placing tile on the existing slab would not allow the

wooden entrance door to open so they were going to lower the whole kitchen floor . When Vic suggested they cut an inch off the bottom of the door the contractor admitted he had never thought of that.

Another time, lack of understanding of basic physical laws led to tragic results. Some expansion was planned, I think the addition of the new library, and it required the removal of the ablutions building in the center of the quadrangle. There was a large water tank on top of the building. During the latter stages of the demolition a worker stood and sledged away at a supporting column until the tank came down, drove a pipe quite through his head.

Loss of life seemed to be accepted rather calmly. On the road from Modagishu to Afgoya we passed each day a place where they were digging a new well, at a restaurant maybe. We watched the project for several weeks until one day work had stopped and there was a pile of dirt with a flag stuck in it. Inquiry led to the explanation. The hole being dug had caved in. The flag was to mark the grave of the two workers who had been buried. No effort was made to rescue them or to retrieve their bodies.

Among the facilities on campus was an off-set press. I think it had fallen into disrepair but Al Corn, our Industrial Arts Advisor and mechanical genius, had restored it to operation and turned out a lot of teaching materials on it during his tour. Al did have a counterpart, Moshin Saad Nagi, a talented artist with some mechanical ability. I don't know just how it happened but I found myself spending time helping Al with the off-set press. I learned how to 'burn' the metal plates and to assist at a press run--the kind of thing I enjoy. For a short period I had major responsibility for the press while Al recuperated from an accident, a rather serious one involving the following details.

An AID official was visiting the project and as part of his entertainment Al took him and his young son to visit a village with which he was familiar. Al had a gun, rifle I think, and did some hunting while in Somalia. On this trip Al with several others including some of the villagers went looking for wild life. Al didn't intend to do any hunting that day but did have his rifle along. They came upon a hippomatus, usually a non-aggressive beast. But this one charged. The Somalis melted away but the Americans tripped and fell, every one of them I was told. Al was the closest and the hippo picked him up in his huge jaws but for some reason dropped him. He was torn up some, spent some time recovering, even went to the States for a short time. It came out that the villagers knew all about this hippo, that it was an ill and mad renegade who had been threatening the village. Since Al had his gun they thought he had come to kill the pest. At Al's request a group, led by Joe Palmer, returned and dispatched the renegade hippo a short time later. Al, I understand, has a table whose top is a piece of the hippo's hide. Someone, I seem to recall, had a cane made of the hippo's penis.

Al would often share some of the results of his hunting with us. One of the delicacies was wart hog. Pork was not available in this Moslem nation so we enjoyed Al's kills. Of course the houseboys wouldn't cook it. For other game Al would get a Somali companion to dress it; otherwise Somali friends couldn't eat any of it if it hadn't been properly slaughtered and bled by a Moslem.

Somali Beaches

South of Mogadishu was a stretch of beautiful beach that we often visited. Sometimes this was with the Gillies, Dave and Millie and young Todd.

There were no trees, no shade on the beach so at one spot we had a thatch shelter built. We couldn't leave any furniture there so Dave and I built a cement table standing on pipe legs fixed in the sand beneath the roof.

We spent many Sundays there, picnicing, sunbathing and skinny dipping. In the same area we'd run across Somalis with lobsters to sell. They had traps anchored just offshore. For a few shillings apiece we'd bring back enough lobster to feast the whole team. Before leaving the States we had been advised to



Bette with lobster trap at Gesira outside Mog



Cement table inside shelter at Gesira

include in our freight a large kettle just for boiling lobster. In fact the team preceding us sent quite a number of suggestions to the oncoming pros--things like bring jockey shorts instead of boxer shorts and shirts with two pockets.

One time the Gillies and ourselves took a between-semester camping trip to Kismayu, a coastal port near the southern tip of Somalia. We hired a Somali driver and his International station wagon for the trip and took along Gillies' cook. Among our provisions Dave included a goodly stock of wine. We had a ball, the five of us and the two Somalis. Butch was away at school I think. The return drive involved some excitement. The seasonal rains had started and the road pretty much disappeared or became so cut up by the truck traffic that it was impassable. We wandered through fields and swamps looking for a way to keep moving. Our Somali driver lost his nerve and Dave or I had to take over the driving. Having been most of the day without anything to eat our cook stopped us at a village where he reconnoitered some food. He returned with a platter of juicy, meat-laden goat bones. We feasted with the grease running off our elbows. At another point a couple police stopped us and insisted on inspecting all our gear which was lashed to the truck roof under a canvas. We started to unload but I threw such a tantrum at the delay they decided to let us go on.

Todd Gillies was just a baby when arriving in Somalia and learned to walk and to speak there. Dave and Milly realized he was growing completely and comfortably bi-lingual. He'd sit on the curb by his home in Mogadishu and chat with passing Somalis. His speech with his parents and all whites would be in normal English. Todd was quite unaware, I think, of what he was doing but he'd speak only Somali with black people and only English with his parents. When they'd ask him to say something in Somali he wouldn't, didn't, I think, know what they were talking about.

There was a couple who were mostly friends of Dave and Millie. He was a Somali, a pilot for the Somali Airlines. She was a blonde American who had met Fudfugosh (that's a phonetic spelling) while a Peace Corp Volunteer a few years back. They had a young son. Fudfugosh was a very westernized

Somali, liked a snifter of brandy after a rubber of bridge. We included this couple on some of our trips to villages. I remember once a big camel blocked the very narrow road. Fudfugosh got out and sweet talked the beast into moving. "After all," he commented, "I was a herd boy for a goodly number of years." Camels were a Somali's wealth and this meant they often kept large herds just to have them, not to turn them into a profit. A young Somali needed to acquire camels in order to buy a wife.

A story Fudfugosh told had to do with a trip he made which took him into Kenya and Masai country. A family member of his tribe was missing and as the oldest son it was Fudfugosh's duty to look into the matter. He took an extensive journey searching for the individual; don't remember if he ever found him. But he came to this Masai village where he received a hero's welcome. The Masai were, we were told once, an embarrassment to the Kenyan government. They insisted on keeping their nomadic lifestyle, living in mud huts, wearing little clothing but that of beautiful red cloth. The men would stride along the road with long cloaks flowing and not covering up very much. They would 'bleed' their cattle, mix blood with urine and draw strength from the potion. The Masai were proud of their heritage as warriors but the Somalis also had a fighting reputation from generations back. The Masai were glad to have a Somali warrior visit and 'killed the fatted calf,' so Fudfugosh reported. But the Masai had an ulterior motive; they recognized an opportunity to strengthen the tribal blood line. Masai live in low mud huts with access through an even lower, winding tunnel. Fudfugosh was led to a hut to retire. When he crawled in he found a nubile young Masai lass waiting for him. When he crawled back through the tunnel he found several Masai warriors with their spears poised preventing his departure and insisting he perform his manly duty. We never heard the bottom line. Fudfugosh's wife was familiar with this story and found it as funny as did the rest of us.

When we were in Kenya once and stopped by a Masai village, a young man in his red robe who had been sitting in the dirt outside his kraal strode up and, in excellent English with an strong Oxford accent, "Ay, Mate. Where you from?" When I replied "Mogadishu." he commented, "Oh Yeh, been having a spot trouble up there isn't it?" (I think it was shortly after the coup when the army took over the government.) Whenever I tell this story I blow it because I can't do a decent British accent.

Butch

Les, I think he was known as to his peers but Butch in the family, thrived in Somalia. His formal schooling suffered some. He was to start his sophomore year the fall we went to Somalia. He enrolled for courses in the University of Nebraska's

Correspondence School. There was an English language school outside of Mogadishu supported by United States Agency for International Development but it only had classes through the eighth grade. An advisor for high school students was provided and she helped with the preparation and submission of correspondence courses. However, this seemed a bit limited for a full three years of high school and for his junior year Butch attended a multi-language boarding school in Switzerland, College de Monte Rosa, It was sited at one end of Lake Geneva as I recall. Being in Switzerland, skiing was a major activity and Butch had to purchase a ski outfit. One of the others attending from Somalia that year was Sue Moncur, daughter

of the Chief of Party of the Wyoming Project. I think the boarding school was a good experience for Butch, but he chafed under the restrictions imposed on the students. For his final year he asked if he could resume his correspondence and live at home and we agreed. When we left Somalia in 1970 Butch was still completing some courses and mailed the final lessons from Europe. He was, then, a graduate of the University of Nebraska Correspondence School. His transcript always caused problems when he enrolled in college; advisors wanted to place him in advance courses thinking he had already taken University work.

Checking their Web in 2001, College Monta Rosa seems to be still flourishing. I stumbled on the fact that well-known author, Amy Tan, was a graduate of this private secondary school.

During his early months in Somalia Butch's social life was hampered by our living out on the campus while many of his activities were in 'town,' in Mogadishu that is. There was a bus that traveled by the campus to Mogadishu but it wasn't always available especially late at night. And the bus driver driver was reluctant to stop at NTEC because often students there jumped off the bus without paying any fare. When we arrived in Somalia, John Metler, our Education Advisor, was posted in the north of the nation, in Hargesya. But while we were still living on campus he moved to a house in Mogadishu. This often became where Butch would end up at night. John always made him welcome, became quite fond of him I think. John missed his own kids during his tour in Somalia.

Butch learned to drive in Somalia. We bought back the little Fiat 600 and this became his car during our final year in Somalia. He had a lot more freedom than we would have felt comfortable with in the States. He traveled with an international bunch of young people spanning a greater age range than would be the case back home. He was not the oldest but I think something of a leader. At least he was the one that would patch up any bits of friction between nationalities. I recall there being among his friends Somalis, Italians, Brits, and Canadiens as well as Americans. Our part of the nation was in what had been Italian Somalia back in colonial days and there was an Italian Club which mostly restricted itself to Italian speaking Europeans. Butch picked up a few words of Italian and maneuvered himself into membership in the Italian Club, took us there a few times as his guest.

This is jumping ahead, but when things got sticky following the 'coup' in 1970 and Europeans were being asked to leave and were being harassed at the airport, the three of us got very gentle treatment—our luggage was not even opened, much less torn apart as was happening to our colleagues. We were not body-searched. There were smiles and good wishes all around. I'd like to think this was all because I was such a fine fellow but I really think it was just that we were Les's Dad and Mother. Butch included among his acquaintances a number of young police officers.

The only time I remember being criticized was an incident involving Ramadan. This is the ninth month on the Moslem lunar calendar and is a month of fasting for all Moslems--a stricter version of Christian Lent. During Ramadan Moslems must not eat or drink from sun-up to sun-down. At night they

would eat their fill, then tend to sleep in the daytime to forget how hungry and thirsty they were. Holding classes during Ramadan was awkward so we had been closing school during Ramadan. It fell so that we were able to use it as a between-semester break. But of course a year of lunar months does not keep pace with the seasons or the western calendar. The lunar months advance about 11 days a year. We soon would be unable to use Ramadan as we had been. To help plan and as the resident astronomer, I published a table showing when Ramadan would fall for the next few years. Ramadan starts nominally at new moon or the next evening when the thin crescent could be seen for the first time setting behind the sun. But only the local Moslem clergyman, the sheik, could make the official announcement that Ramadan was indeed starting (or ending). On a street in Mogadishu I was accosted by an elderly, bearded individual who shook his finger in my face. I was told he was berating me as 'the one who thought he could predict Ramadan when only the sheik could do that.' Our staff had used my table and made no mention of its being an inappropriate action by an infidel.

The Cold War

I seem to remember that one of Butch's friends was the son of a Somali official by the name of Egal who at the time was the head of the police in Somalia. This was the peak of the 'cold war' and great efforts were being made by countries to secure friends, trading partners, even military bases around the world and mostly in 'third world' countries. This, in fact, was the real reason we were in Somalia. The United States, Russia and China were all courting favor with the Somali government. The United States had been sponsors of Ethiopia, Somalia's arch enemy, but that was changing. Anyway, Egal's police force had received a lot of support from the United States. Many police had taken training in the States. On the other hand, Russia supplied support and training for the Somali Army. They had, for example, supplied a fleet of old tanks. On one holiday the army held a big parade and hoped to drive their tanks through Magadishu. But they all turned out to be inoperable, were rusted out, had not seen any maintenance for a long time.

Egal's falling into disfavor preceded the coup in which the Army took over the government. One cause for his arrest had to do with the national elections. Under the law a Somali man could vote wherever he was on election day. Guess having to return to one's home village to vote was a Christian thing going back to biblical times as was the case with Joseph and Mary. The practice at the polling places was to stamp the back of the individual's hand with indelible ink to indicate he had already voted. But this didn't really work and office seekers would haul truckloads of supporters from polling place to polling place to vote. Egal's refusal to allow the use of the fleet of American-provided police trucks in such an operation was part of what led to his arrest and imprisonment.

This same Egal, Muhammed Haji Ibrahim Egal, is the man currently (2000) the president of Somaliland, the break-away republic with its capital in Hargesya. Egal's is the only functioning and reasonably stable government in Somalia.

I got a bit involved in this voting scam, innocently but stupidly. One of my counterparts, not one of

the better ones, came to me one day with a story. Seems his wife was having real trouble getting their sheets white and he'd consider it a great favor if I could get him a bottle of Clorox at the American Commisary. This was a no-no, to make purchases for Somalis; the Commisary had duty-free privileges and was intended to benefit AID and Embassy personnel only. But what the heck, the poor guy had a legitimate problem. When my other counterparts found out about this they laughed at me, pointed out that what the character was really doing was using the Clorox to remove the 'voted' stamp from his friends' hands.

I remember when this same counterpart, wish I could remember his name, arrived to become part of the NTEC staff. After being in the States he visited his home and was flying in to Magadishu. I met the plane, planning to welcome him, help him settle in. But when he deplaned he was surrounded by a horde of Somalis, rushed with his luggage into a vehicle and I didn't get to meet him for days. It seems he was smuggling in bags of khat and his friends weren't going to let him go until they'd gotten their share. There probably was considerable partying before the chap came to work. Khat (or Qat) is the plant that is widely chewed for it's stimulative effect. It is grown mostly over the border in Ethiopia and truckloads are smuggled into Somalia daily. The current lack of a central government is currently, 2001, a boon for the khat smugglers.

The competition among expatriate nations for the favor of Somali officials verged on the ludicrous. At restaurants you'd see a table of Russians wining and dining one group of Somalis and the Americans or the Chinese at another doing the same thing. (Well, maybe not wining. Somali officials had to be careful about drinking alcohol in public. But many of our counterparts were regular imbibers.)

An incident happened at the Hargesia Club up north. A group was staying there for some reason and Dave Gillies was in the group. Also in residence were a group of Chinese and a group of Russians. The Chinese stayed very much to themselves. It was clear that one of them was top dog. When the Chinese would enter the dining room, always in single file, in pecking order one assumes, one of them would graciously hold the chair for the leader. The Russians were much more relaxed, and the Americans often dined with some of them. One morning for breakfast Dave had the Americans and Russians line up single file with a Russian in front. When they got to their table Dave ran from the back to hold the chair for the lead Russian. The Chinese sat stony faced as if they they didn't know they were being teased.

I too found it easier to relate to the Russians than to many of the other ex-patriot groups working in Somalia. The United Nations in Somalia, UNESCO probably, set up a number of curriculum committees to guide the Ministry of Education in the formation of the secondary curriculum. I chaired one of these, physics, and sat on one or two others. On UN's general science curriculum committee there were Italians, Egyptians, Somalis, a Russian and myself. This may have been after the Brits had left. There were Germans active in education matters but I don't think on this particular committee. It seemed to me the Italians and Egyptians had some weird ideas as to the grouping and sequences of science topics. The Russian chap

and I were usually in agreement. He was a physics instructor at Benadir High School which the Russians had established outside of Magadishu. Of course they had to function in English because the Somalis knew no Russian and the Russians knew no Somal. The Russian language staff spoke excellent English but in other subject areas their English was somewhat limited. I can recall the Russian physics teacher on the science committee trying to make some point and being frustrated by his lack of the right English phrase. Many times he'd poke me and say, "Thomas, you tell them." Some of the Russian teachers at Benadir were women. But the Chinese brought no women with them to Somalia.

An American ploy to impress Somalis was to include a black or two in every delegation--a black civil servant or Congressman maybe. This was done in the belief there was some sort of kinship feeling among all blacks and this would demonstrate how well off American blacks were. The effect was apt to be quite negative. The grandparents, even the parents, of many Somalis had been slave owners. Slavery was practised among both pastoral and agriculturist Somalis up to and even after dominance by British and Italian colonial powers. Somalis considered American blacks not as their 'black brethren' but as kinfolk of their former slaves who had been shipped to the Americas instead of into Somali slavery. We saw the holding cells for incoming slaves in Merca and understood there had been many such in Magadishu.

A major German effort in Somalia was the establishment of a technical school in the north. The use of hand tools and maybe some simple power tools were taught by German expats. Once when I and some others were on a trip to Hargesya we visited the German school. This may be the time when Bette, Butch and I were there. It was while John Metler was still posted in the north because he graciously gave us his house (and cook) and moved into the Hargesya Club. One of the Somalis who had taken work at EMU (Nuh Ahmen Osman, mentioned above) had been appointed headmaster which may have been one reason we decided to visit the German tech school. John took us in the NTEC jeep which he had while serving in Hargesya. Butch was along and I think Mohammed Ali Mohammed, a phys ed staff member at NTEC whom we also knew in the States.

It was on this trip that we had a demonstration of the 'bush telegraph.' We decided on the trip one evening and got an early start the next morning without making any arrangements or notifying the school. When we came to a crossroads and weren't sure which branch to take, a Somali stepped out and clearly pointed how we were to go. It turned out to be correct. When we pulled into the school yard the headmaster greeted us and asked, "What took you so long, we thought you'd be here an hour ago." We never did learn how he knew we were coming. The German Chief of Party showed us the school--the labs and work shops. When he showed us student work stations with tools not cleaned nor sharpened, not stored in their proper places I think I saw tears in his eyes. The German people, I've always believed, are noted as careful and orderly craftsmen and the African disregard for order, proper maintenance and the like, this expat just couldn't understand. This man and his wife later visited us in Mogadishu.

But our African friends had superiorities of their own. A story involves the same Mohammed Ali Mohammed mentioned above. It happened when Mohammed was on campus at EMU. A group of profs

went to lunch with Mohammed, at Howard Johnsons or some such place. There were ten or twelve of us and two waitresses took our orders. One of them wrote furiously while taking an order. The other listened carefully to what we said. Mohammed noted the difference and remarked that he predicted the writer wouldn't get orders right. Sure enough, the writer came and didn't have the foggiest who got what. The listener swept in with each order just right. Somalis, probably most Africans, seem to have prodigious memories. After all, as Moslems they had to be able to do such things as recite their ancestral line back dozens of generations. At Somali elementary schools it was the practice to hold services each morning in the school yard and a school child would be asked to 'read' long passages from the Koran, at least this happened when there were visitors. But we were given to understand the child would be reciting the Arabic from memory and didn't know what the meaning was or nor was he relating the words with the Arabic script. One issue that slowed the adoption of a written alphabet for the Somali language was the debate over the script to be used. Many, the sheiks at least, argued for an Arabic script because they were already familiar with Arabic writing. But most educators argued that a Latin script was much more viable. When we arrived in Somalia there were no texts written in Somal. It wasn't until after the dictatorship was established in 1969 that the government was strong enough to defy the Sheiks and adopt a Latin script.

The Hargesya Club was the only viable place to stay and eat in Hargesya. It was run by a British widow by the name of Beryl. She was a good friend of John Metler's during his stay up north in Hargesya. The Club included a typical British pub, complete with dart board and a group of hangers-on, mostly Brits. It was the only place I ever played darts, even learned to keep score but never became very skilled. One time the group of patrons was larger than usual and they seemed to be forming up for something. I was told what was going on. It seems one of the faithful had died a few years back and every year on the anniversary of his death, a gang of his cronies would take a bottle of good Scotch up to his grave and pour it into a pipe which had been driven therein.

There was another restaurant in Hargsya, The Oriental something. Vic Cocco had a story about a time he was there, to meet someone I think, and sitting in the lobby. He could see into the kitchen where an old Somali was squatted beside a big pan filled with greasy water, probably neither hot nor very soapy. Dirty dishes were brought to him and he'd run them through the water and stack them beside him. Vic reported that the man got caught up on his dish washing. Before the next batch arrived he slipped his sandals off, stuck his feet, one at a time, into the tub, carefully washed them, then carried on with his dish washing..

Another story, an old one but I heard it first when Vic Cocco told it and I've told it so many times Mary becomes a bit ill when I repeat it. Seems there's a way, when sitting in an African bar, to distinguish the old hands from ex-pats just off the plane. When someone finds a fly in his beer and he's a neophyte he'll shove the beer back and demand a fresh one. If he's been there awhile he'll simply flick the fly out and go on with his beer. But if he's really a veteran, been through some hard times, he'll carefully squeeEEEEEE

all the beer out of the fly into his glass before casting it aside.

Bonny

Bonny dropped out of Michigan State after her freshman year and joined her family in Somalia. It would have been for the academic year 1968-1969. Butch had left for school in Switzerland so she could occupy his bedroom. We had, by then, moved to a house on the edge of Mogadishu, Kilometre Four it was called. Housing units on campus were needed for Somali staff and most of the expatriate staff had been moved to housing in town. It meant a bit of a commute but the NTEC vehicle and driver picked us up most days. After Butch went to Switzerland, I'd sometimes ride his Vespa to campus. The wives, I think, preferred to live in Magadishu. It was handier to the rest of the expatriate community and to what shopping there was.



Inside Km 4 house



Bonny, Butch, the Vespa and the Fiat outside KM 4 house

I remember the day Bonny arrived in Somalia. She had not flown very much and certainly not alone on international flights halfway around the world. We were very nervous, visualized her missing connections, getting on wrong planes, losing her luggage, being stranded in strange airports, being unable to communicate in whatever language was needed. Surely if she arrived at all it'd be as a teary, frightened youngster who would collapse in our arms. Instead, when she spotted us after deplaning at the Mogadishu airport she waved airily and sauntered into the terminal as though this were a routine experience. It was, "Hi, Mom, Hi, Dad, Good to see ya." with little show of excitement much less panic. I didn't know whether to hug her or scold her! I think Bonny enjoyed her year in Somalia but her thoughts were surely much on back home where she'd left her 'intended.'

R and R

Once in a two-year tour the contract provided 'R & R,'--Rest and Rehabilitation. We could get round-trip air fare to a destination providing a cultural change. From Somalia that pretty much meant Europe. When we signed up for the second two-year tour we got 'Home Leave'-- air fare to the States. I can recall a number of things we did on R and R, but many things are blurred and sequences are vague. On one trip to Europe we took two separate cruises in the Mediterranean. Butch and Bonny were along on this one. On one cruise we had second class accommodations but Butch found kids were having more fun in third class and that's where he spent his time. On one European visit we rented a car and drove, I think, from Rome into Switzerland.

But the trip I remember best was the one that included a train ride into Denmark and the 'Land of the Midnight Sun.' On the train I woke up and saw it was broad daylight and made my way to the dining car for some breakfast only to find it closed down. It seems it was only about 2:00 a.m. It was on this trip that I made my way to the island of Hven.



My favorite among the great astronomers was the Dane, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601). Harry Smith had told me about his visit to the remnants of Tycho's observatory a couple of years earlier and I was determined to go there. The location is on the island of Ven (or Hven) in the sound between Denmark and Sweden. In Tycho's time Ven was a part of Denmark but for centuries now has belonged to Sweden. In fact, the only access to it was a ferry from Sweden. We were staying in Copenhagen at the time. It was from the village of Tuborg (where I had my first sample of newly brewed beer) that Bette and I took a ferry to

Landskronen.

In most of Europe one can get along quite nicely in English and this was true in Copenhagen,. But in Tuborg and Landskronen and on Ven this was not the case. While we were in Landskronen we needed to eat and spotted a restaurant which turned out to be a cafeteria where the locals were queued up. A big sign listed the menu dishes. Great, no problem here. We each pointed at something, not having any idea what it was but it would be food. The servings were set on counter for patrons to take. Since we hadn't the foggiest notion of what we'd ordered, we had a bit of a problem. When a couple of dishes had sat there for a bit we cautiously retrieved them. When no one protested we figured they must be ours. We learned there was indeed a ferry to Ven but had no way of learning what was on the island by way of accommodations. In case the night had to be spent beneath a tree we decided Bette would return to Copenhagen and I would make the trip over alone.

Many consider Tycho Brahe the greatest observational astronomer of all times, but it's difficult to make comparisons between his day when he had no optical aids--no telescope, no photography, no spectroscope, no computer, etc, etc.-- with later periods when such tools were available. For example, he didn't even have a lens for an ocular to read the fine markings on his setting circles. But even so, he recorded timed positions and measured angular separations of celestial objects with a precision comparable to much more modern measurements. He did this in part by fashioning huge observing instruments having scales spread along very large arcs. Tycho had Frederick II of Denmark as his patron and it was this monarch who gave him the tiny island of Ven as his private fiefdom.

There were, and still are, a few dozen farm families on Ven, and these Tycho pressed into building him a multi-story residence, a castle really which he named Uraniborg after Urania, the Muse of Astronomy. He imported artisans of all kinds because he designed and built everything he used--clocks, a printing press, a distillery, a church as well as his observing machines. His first instruments were mounted atop his castle but here they were not nearly stable enough. Most of his work was done in an observatory located nearby and in which the bases of his observing machines were beneath the surface of the earth.

Arriving on Ven I found that Sweden operated a small Tycho Brahe museum there and that the

Curator spoke English. He also operated a small inn but it was filled with a group of visiting school children. However, the good man took me under his wing. He contacted a nearby farm wife who provided me with a bed for the night. And he prepared a fine supper for me. The next day the Curator spent a good deal of time showing me around.

The place where the castle Uraniborg had been was still visible; the foundation outline showed. But the building itself was torn down, brick-by-brick the story had it, soon after Tycho lost his fiefdom and left the island. He had not been a popular landlord. The above-ground part of the observatory had been restored but below, inside, only remnants of foundations showed where walls and instruments had been. One of the relics I saw was a manuscript purportedly written by Johannes Kepler. A most interesting sequence ties together the fundamental scientific and philosophical work of Nicolas Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Galileo and Isac Newton but this is probably not the place to tell it. The Copernican (heliocentric) Revolution that put the Earth (and hence man) in its proper place in a near-infinite universe was just starting during Tycho's time. Tycho himself argued in favor of a modified geocentric theory of the solar system and so did not run afoul of the Church and other leaders as Galileo was to do a century later. It's ironic that it was Tycho's careful measurements and record keeping that constituted the observational proof of the theoretical work of Kepler, Galileo and Newton even though their accomplishments belong to the seventeenth century.

Many stories are extant about Tycho. He lost part of his nose during a duel in his younger days. Artisan that he was he fashioned artificial ones--a wooden one for every day and a gold one for special occasions. Kepler, who worked as Tycho's assistant during the latter's final years, wrote about his death, which did not occur on Ven. It seems Tycho, a great party man, was entertaining and needed to relieve himself. But he thought it rude to leave his guests; his bladder burst and he died. So wrote Kepler.

Termination (And the CIA)

In 1967 we had signed two-year contracts with the EMU/USAID Somalia project. At the end of these contracts three of us--Lou Porretta, Dave Gillies and myself--signed up for two more years. We were nearing the end of the first year of our second contract when the project was terminated. This action by US/AID came at the insistence of the State Department who were being pressured in turn by some U.S. Congressmen. The United States was in the midst of the Vietnam conflict and it was to go on several more years, long enough for Butch to serve there while in the Navy after we all returned home. Some shipping had been seen in a North Vietnam harbor bearing the Somali flag. They were not Somali ships; Somalia had no navy nor merchant vessels. But as was the practice, some other country's ships were flying the Somali flag because Somalia was a neutral country and they could thus avoid the blockade. A provision of a US/AID contract was that if it were terminated for any reason, there would be a full phase-out year so that the termination would have minimum impact on the host country. Lou, Dave and I expected to complete our tours. A number of things needed to be wound up. Goods were

in transit from the States, books, more library shelves, etc.

But US/AID received a communication from the Somali government asking for early departure dates for American Advisors. They were listed, all the Advisors on the Wyoming team and on the EMU team. All, that is, except Thomas. This was an omission that none of us understood. Apparently I was being asked to stay. Throughout our tours we were suspected by many Somalis of trying to proselytize Somalis, not only away from their Moslem faith but towards precepts of democracy not consistent with the government's way of thinking. Perhaps the feeling was that the opportunity for this kind of thing was less likely in science and math than in, say, social studies. It's quite possible I was trusted because I was Butch's Dad. Maybe I worked a bit harder at turning the reins over to my counterparts. But Dave Gillies, for example, had excellent rapport with the Somalis with whom he worked and he was on the list.

There ensued a confusing few weeks for the Thomases. Lou's perception was that I should leave with the team. He felt one man could not accomplish very much and he may have been right. But others were pressuring me to stay. Campus assured me I'd have full support if I stayed, my own secretary for example. I received any number of cables from campus urging me to stay. At first I thought these were coming from Stan Gex who was campus coordinator but I learned that it was President Sponberg who was sending the cables. And he was being pressured by the US Ambassador to Somalia to keep me there, I learned. I came to believe that the real pressure to keep me in Somalia came from the CIA.

Relations between the United States and Somalia had soured somewhat. A few weeks prior there had been a coup and the Russian trained army had taken over. In a separate incident the elected president had been assassinated. Soldiers manned the road between Magadishu and Afgoya and would level their rifles at vehicles to stop and inspect them. About this time, though, Russia had started sponsoring Ethiopia and were no more welcome in Somalia than were Brits and Italians and Americans. In case evacuation became necessary a communications network was set up among the American community and under Embassy leadership. I was given a radio linking to the Embassy and assigned a group of neighbors to contact in case of need.

At a cocktail part I was taken aside by an embassy official and quizzed as to the possibility of my continuing to work at NTEC. Some Germans had been lined up to take over at NTEC and I was asked if I could work with them. I answered, "Sure," which was true. My answer seemed to please my interrogator.

I was tempted to stay. I was sure I could do a lot to further the goals of the project, help assure the success of the College of Education at Afgoya. But it was not completely clear that my family would be safe. We decided to leave, were issued our airplane tickets. The cables kept coming. I was at the Embassy making my check-out rounds when one of the known CIA chaps (who had been declared PNG along with the others) asked what I was doing. When I told him he said, "But you can't leave. Have you seen this morning's cable?" I hadn't but obviously he had even though it was addressed to me. It was another plea from President Sponberg to continue with the project. I became convinced that if I'd stayed I would have

been asked to be eyes and ears for the CIA--might have had a whole new career. We still had an Embassy there although I think work on the new one outside of town had been stopped. But the Ambassador was completely isolated, nobody in GOS was talking to him and he could supply his government with no information as to what was going on. Somalis could not go near the American Embassy or, for that matter, be seen talking to an American.

Butch, Bette and I left Somalia on June 30, 1970, just three years after arriving. As reported above, our departure was without incident. We were nervous about it though. Bette had bought a skin, leopard I think. We had papers for it but I made her leave it, didn't want any excuse for trouble at the airport. Turned out, it would never have been discovered. We also complied with the Somali government's currency restrictions and I carried only the 50 shillings allowed.

We're Out

Arriving in Rome we were a bit relieved. We were familiar with the city having stayed there on previous trips, on R and R and during our home-leave at the end of our second year in Somalia. I think we stayed at the Madrid Hotel, so named I suppose, because it was near the Spanish Steps. As soon as we arrived I called Campus and finally located Dean Gex who was travelling at the time. I reported that we were safely out of Somalia. (Although the Porrettas were still there.) It was a provision of EMU's contract with US/AID that if the project were terminated early, project funds would continue staff on the payroll to the end of their individual contract. But to maintain its good record EMU wanted to work staff back into their regular positions and off the contract payroll as soon as possible. They might want to negotiate another contract one day, as indeed they did. But this was in July, 1970, so when I spoke with Dean Gex I pointed out that there was probably nothing for me to do on campus. He agreed with a bit of reluctance. So I said, "See you in September," or words to that effect. We took a full month in Europe while still drawing my overseas pay.

We had checked into a hotel but wouldn't be able to check out until we raised some money. So the first thing we did in Rome was to visit the American Express Office. They would, at that time anyway, provide some \$500 in local currency on one's American Express card. Butch had his own card which he had used while in school in Switzerland so we stood in different lines to obtain the maximum number of Lira for each of us.

We had sold both our cars before leaving Somalia. The project would ship a car home for us but I figured why ship a three-year-old car. Instead we bought a car in Rome, had it to use while in Europe and then shipped it home. It was another Fiat. There had been a strike at the Fiat plant and cars weren't immediately available. But the dealer found one, a rather sporty model. Butch thought it was great and eventually it became his car in the States.

Bette and I heard that Portugal was one of the cheaper tourist destinations so we planned to drive to the Algarve region and hole up. Another couple from the Wyoming project who had left Somalia with us wanted to join us for part of the trip. This left little room for Butch who was not eager to spend all that time

with the old folks anyway. He had had a little Vespa in Somalia and thought it would be great to get a bigger bike and see Europe on his own, contact the many acquaintances he had scattered around. So, we bought him a Lambretta and he took off. Butch covered a bit of Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland on that bike. He was, after all, some nineteen years old and a most responsible, out-going young man.

Neither he nor his folks knew exactly where they were going so we agreed to keep in touch via American Express offices. These provided a mail drop for card carriers. The plan was that when we knew where we'd be staying I'd scatter a letter to the several cities where Butch thought he'd stop and he'd check for a letter whenever he hit a city with an American Express office. The plan worked.

Bette and I drove out of Rome, a bit of an experience in itself, and headed for the Algarve. Our friends were with us. Not far along we had car trouble, the Fiat was heating up. No one at a garage we found spoke English but they undertook to take care of the problem. But Bill and I thought we had already found it. The cooling fan wasn't turning over, obviously the fan belt was gone. With a great amount of gesturing we tried to point out what the problem was. We thought these stupid Italians should be able to see the problem. Turns out, we were the stupid ones. I had never seen an engine with the cooling fan operated by an electric motor. The Italians brushed us aside, found the burned-out fuse and sent us on our way.

We ended up at a little fishing village in the Algarve, name of Lagos. When we inquired for accommodations we were directed to a residence where the lady ran a little bed and breakfast. It was tiny but delightful. The landlady didn't speak a word of English but we'd hold long conversations in sign language. She made it clear her husband (espouso?) was a boat captain away fishing. She had a teen age son who, surprisingly, spoke no English either. There we holed up for about a month. Our pattern came to be that after a simple breakfast we'd visit the bottle store, the bakery and the grocers and carry a lunch to the beach and spend the day. In the evening we'd patronize one of the two restaurants, both run by expatriate Brits so language was not a problem.

Once settled in the Algarve we sent several letters to Butch because he was to join us for the flight back to the States. One afternoon when we returned to our quarters Butch was waiting for us, a rather sorry sight. He'd been eating the fumes and dirt on the highways for several days since his last bath and was tired and hungry. Among his first words were, "Dad, do I have to ride that thing anymore?" He had started out on top of the world and had a great time but felt enough was enough. A gas line on the Lambretta had sprung a leak and gas had dripped down his leg for the past few hundred miles. Among his adventures was a near accident on the autobahn. He came upon a pile-up and had to maneuver to keep out of it. Butch was all praise for the German road patrol which showed up promptly to straighten things out including his luggage carrier which had broken off. They had it strapped back on, patted him on the back and sent him on his way in a matter of minutes.

Butch told us his pattern had been he'd camp out or find a youth hostel or look up a friend and thus

conserve his funds for several days. Then he'd check into a real hotel for one night--a bed, a bath and a good meal.

Our landlady evicted her son from his cot in a little alcove to accomodate Butch for the few days before we drove to Lisbon and made arrangements for shipping our car back to the States. We flew ourselves shortly thereafter

In October, 2004, as I was doing some work with these chapters and read through this one, I wondered what ever happened at our campus outside of Afgoya. Surprisingly, I was able to find quite a bit on the internet. One site, www.lafoole.com was put up by the Somali Teachers Association (SOTAS). It seems that in the 70s the campus at NTEC thrived under the authoritarian rule of Sayed Barre. New buildings were put up, the curriculum expanded. Over 1,000 students were in residence. The site was named Lafoole, but I've not been able to find the origin of the name.

Then, on a site at www.netnomad.com there is a report by a visitor to Somalia sometime, I guess, in 2003. The report includes a decription of Mogadishu and environs. The chap visited the remnants of NTEC. It was the site of a refugee camp. Squatters were encamped in the buildings including the library. Their cooking fires had blackened the walls. An old man emerged from one of the staff houses, it could have been the very one we lived in when first arriving on the project in 1967. It seems the chap was an ex-history professor, now unemployed and impoverished, who was surviving on handouts.

No schools except for Koran classes were operating in the nation. One wonders how a generation of illiterates with no skills except those of a nomadic society can rebuild a viable nation even if a stable government can be established.

A bit of trivia: In this researching I stumbled across a word I've been trying to pin down, didn't know its spelling. The garmet of choice of Somali men is a wrap-around skirt, waist to ankle. They make a great leisure garment and I still have a couple that I put on on rare occasions. I seemed to remember it was called a 'maweess' or something like that. It turns out I was pretty close. The anglicized spelling is "ma'awis." The word has three syllables--'mah-ah-wees', so I've not been pronouncing it correctly.

In December, 2006, we've stumbled on some State Department communications that support and add too some of the above and report on Somali history and the termination of EMU's Somalia project. We'll paste here a few narrations paraphrasing telegrams to the State Department which appear in "Volume E-5 Documents on Africa, 1969-1972" on the Department's web site. They support the story as told above except that theydo not confirm that it was the C.I.A. that was pressuring to keep me in Somalia. But I beleive it was.

Rogers reported the assassination of Somali President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke on October 15. (The

EMU Team's understanding that the assassination was not a part of the coup but had may have triggered it.)

Kissinger reported that elements of the Somali army and police had seized power from Prime Minister Egal's elected government. For the United States, the most important issue was the survival or collapse of ditente in the Horn. If Somalia returned to bellicose irredentism, tensions would rise throughout the area, including Kenya and Ethiopia

Ambassador Hadsel (U.S. ambasador to Somalia) reported on his meeting with President General Siad of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, during which he indicated U.S. willingness to cancel its phase-out of AID programs and described U.S. encouragement of private investment activities. Hadsel told Siad that recognition of North Vietnam and Somali flag ships carrying cargo there could create significant problems. Siad sought to brush away any implication that Somalia might be dominated by the Soviets through military and economic assistance programs

Ambassador Azhari (Somali Ambassador to U. S.), in a farewell visit with Secretary Rogers, stated that ditente would continue as would Somali flag vessels trading with North Vietnam. While the financial benefits of the latter were negligible, the trade continued as a matter of national sovereignty and prestige. The Secretary noted that Congress had laid down very explicit instructions with regard to aid to countries engaged in such trade

Ambassador Hadsel reported that he had informed General Siad that U.S. bilateral assistance would terminate as of June 1, 1970. Hadsel believed this would further strain U.S.-Somali relations

The telegram reported that Foreign Secretary Arteh had informed the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission that the June 6 aide-memoire providing 1 year to phase-out projects was appreciated. However, Somalia preferred to assume responsibility for the projects as soon as practicable

In a conversation with Newsom, Somali Ambassador Addou reported that Somalia had virtually lost its independence to the Soviet Union. General Siad remained suspicious of the United States, but Addou urged keeping communications open

And then there's this telegram, reproduced on the same State Department website. It describes how the decision to leave one advisor in the country was established in a meeting of Ministry officials, U.S. AID and EMU. That advisor apparently wasn't named at that meeting but the fact that the cummunication asking for departure dates listed all EMU and Wyoming advisors except Thomas implies the Minsitry was suggesting that advisor be he.

TELEGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF STATE 1395

R 15100Z JUN 70

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7674

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY ROME

MOGADISCIO 1395

CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

JOINT EMBASSY/USAID MESSAGE

SUBJ: PHASE-OUT SOMALI AID

1. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION JUNE 1 WITH AMBASSADOR AND FOREIGN SECRETARY, ARTEH RAISED SUBSTANCE AIDE-MEMOIRE WE HAD DELIVERED JUNE 6 ON TERMINATION AND PHASE OUT OF AID. HE SAID BOTH SRC AND COUNCIL OF SECRETARIES HAD CONSIDERED AIDE MEMOIRE. MAKING STRONG POINT THAT GSDR GREATLY APPRECIATED FLEXIBILITY DEMONSTRATED BY USG OF PROVIDING UP TO A YEAR FOR PHASE-OUT PERIOD, HE SAID THAT IT HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN DECIDED THAT SOMALIA SHOULD ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECTS AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. HE DID NOT RPT NOT SET A DEADLINE. HOWEVER, HE ASKED THAT WE CONSULT FURTHER WITH APPROPRIATE SECRETARIES TO SET TERMINATION DATES AND INDICATE DEPARTURE PLANS OF PERSONNEL CONCERNED. ARTEH ALSO MADE IT CLEAR REQUEST DID NOT AFFECT THOSE THINGS TO WHICH WE WERE COMMITTED OR THOSE PROGRAMS OF REGIONAL OR MULTILATERAL NATURE.

2. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH SECRETARIES OF PLANNING, EDUCATION, PUBLIC WORKS AND AGRICULTURE, WE CONFIRMED THAT ABOVE AND WORKED OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR THOSE PROJECTS AFFECTED BY AID TERMINATIONS.

A. EASTERN MICHIGAN NTEC: SECRETARY OF EDUCATION REQUESTED CONTINUATION FOR NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR ONE ADVISER (FINANCE). REST OF PROJECT WILL COME TO END BY OPENING OF NEXT TERM (END OF JULY OR EARLY AUGUST). COMMITMENT RE COMMODITIES (MAINLY BOOKS) WILL BE FULFILLED.

B. WYOMING UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURE SERVICES ALL ADVISERS TO BE TERMINATED BY EARLY JULY, FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS AND REMAINING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES STILL UNDER WYOMING CONTROL. COMPLETION OF DEMONSTRATION CENTER NOT AFFECTED.

C. ADVISERS IN CHISIMAIO: WATER AND SEWER ADVISERS WILL CONTINUE FOR TWELVE MONTH PERIOD. PORT ADVISER SUBJECT FURTHER DISCUSSION.

3. WHEN ABOVE IS COMPLETED, USAID STAFF WILL CONSIST OF FOUR OFFICERS (GEORGE, JOHNSON, WALLACE AND BRONKOWSKI) AND ONE SECRETARY (NELSON).

4. SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE BEING SENT TO ARTEH TODAY AS HE REQUESTED. TEXT OF LETTER BEING POUCHED.

5: COMMENTS ATMOSPHERE OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS SECRETARIES REMAINED GOOD, AND CONCLUSIONS OUTLINED ABOVE ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE WHICH WERE EMERGING FROM TALKS WITH MINISTRY STAFF LAST WEEK. WE SHALL BE WORKING OUT THE DETAILS DURING COMING DAYS, IF THINGS CONTINUE TO MOVE AS INDICATED BY ABOVE CONVERSATIONS, WE SHALL HAVE RESHAPED THE AID PROGRAM BY EARLY JULY.
HADSEL

NOTE: CU, EUR TAKE AS ORIGINAL.