



MARCH 2009

Number 12

Board Members

President:

John Staub, 98-99: Chicago, IL

Vice President:

Katie Reidy, 99-01: Washington, DC

Treasurer:

Lance Cole, 93-94: Portland, OR

Secretary:

(vacant-needed)

Membership:

Kristen George, 02-04: Baltimore, MD

Grants:

Katie Reidy, 99-01: Washington, DC
Ellen Collisson, 68-70: Claremont, CA
Tom Welte, 68-70: Orinda, CA

Newsletter:

Beth Evans, 62-64: Longmeadow, MA

Delegate to NPCA:

Sandra Lauffer is the representative for Central and Southern Africa

HOW TO CONTACT FOM

MAILING ADDRESS:

Friends Of Malawi

c/o E.E. Evans
85 Inverness Lane
Longmeadow, MA 01106

PRESIDENT:

John Staub
President@FriendsOfMalawi.org

MEMBERSHIP:

Kristen George
kristengeorge00@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER:

Beth Evans
evans85@comcast.net

GRANTS:

Katie Reidy
FOMgrants@yahoo.com
(Grant application forms available on request from this address)

TREASURER:

Lance Cole
zikomo@easystreet.net

F. O. M. GRANTS REPORT

The following grants have been awarded by *Friends Of Malawi* since the previous newsletter went to print.

NDIFE AMODZI RURAL LIBRARY ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT

(\$550) The rural library is a structure on the grounds of Kakoma Community Day Secondary School that was constructed with funding from the US Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund. It was overseen by PCV Dave Smith, Environment 2005-2007. The project will allow for expansion of community development work and adult education

LINYANGWA AQUACULTURE CLUB

(\$269) Linyangwa Village is located five kilometers from the border and entrance of Kasungu National Park.

The club wants to sell fish to raise funds for the construction of a nursery school. Department of Fisheries extension officer, David Itim, has visited the proposed site for a fishpond and has committed himself as a technical advisor to the group. There also is a commitment to shift away from tobacco farming and its inherent problems. The first objective is to build a 20x20 meter earthen fishpond and stock it with 800 fingerlings of *Talapia oreochromis*. Profits will pay for the construction of the nursery school.

BUNKS FOR BOARDERS

(\$5861) (Matenje Community Day Secondary School) There are 50 boys and 50 girls who board at the school and sleep on cement floors without mosquito nets. The school also lacks textbooks. This grant will provide 50 bunk beds and mosquito nets as well as much needed textbooks and calculators. Local carpenters will construct the beds while teaching basic carpentry skills to 10 students. These students will be provided with basic tools so that they will be able to maintain and repair minor damages to the facilities in the future.

NDIRANDE MARKET HYGIENE & SANITATION PROJECT

(\$500 + \$513). A previous FOM award of \$500 was used to help with solid and liquid waste management, care for a public toilet, focus on personal hygiene of vendors, food hygiene, and a donation of 15 dustbins and 110 traditional brooms.

The newly funded project will promote hygiene and sanitation in the most highly populated areas of Ndirande Township, mainly the market area, through training for behavior change in hygiene and sanitation practices. Specific objectives are to protect the environment from pollution, educate people on the need to have a clean market and township, and to decrease transmission of diseases. Market Leaders will have bylaws and those found throwing away solid or liquid waste can be fined.

Cont. p 2

MALAWI VII REUNION

GRANTS REPORT CONTINUED

HIV/AIDS LIFE SKILLS TRAINING Ukhondo Services Foundation (\$513)

This training course for 25 male and female market leaders in Ndirande Township focused on knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to make choices in sexual and reproductive health care.

Topics included: *Definition of HIV and AIDS, *Relationship and the difference between HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, *Explanation of some of the factors fueling the pandemic, *Stages of HIV/AIDS, *Prevention of HIV/AIDS, *Culture and beliefs which contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS, *Condoms and how and when to use them, *Gender and HIV/AIDS, *Communication skills and self esteem, *Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), *Family planning methods (Depo, pills, tubal ligation, IUCD, vasectomy, condoms) with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

* * * * *

NEWS!

FOM has a facegroup now! We encourage all supporters to join our group and invite your friends to join as well.

You can locate the group by searching for "Friends of Malawi (FOM)" on www.facebook.com.

By Sandra Lauffer

Alumni of *Malawi VIII* staged their first reunion forty-three years after they first encountered each other in Peace Corps training at Syracuse University. The group met in Sutton, New Hampshire, in early October 2008. It took a year of planning to pull off this great event, during which we managed to track down all but two of the 33 Volunteers who arrived at Chileka Airport in early January of 1966 to begin their two year assignments as secondary school teachers.

Of the 33 members, five were deceased, and eight were unable to attend. The 18 teachers who came together, with spouses and friends, were hosted by two of our own, Garry and Tereza Prime, who had met in training, married in Malawi, and gave birth to their first son there. We all gloried in each other and in the beauty of autumn in New England, with walks in the woods, canoe races, and shared meals, all laced with memories and stories of our time in Malawi and our histories since.

Some carried on in the field of education, getting advanced degrees and teaching at the secondary school and university levels. Others pursued careers in international affairs, medicine, psychiatry, social work, business, public service, and journalism. Two who could

not join us were out of the country — one in India where she was visiting orphanages, and one in southern Sudan, where she leads a technical assistance program. The one who traveled farthest flew in from China, where she teaches English. One man and his wife just submitted their applications to Peace Corps for another tour. Another had already completed a second tour, in Romania. Our hosts have been active in Malawi for years, helping to found and to serve on the board of Malawi Children’s Village. Others have traveled to Malawi over the years, as professionals or tourists, staying connected to a place and an experience that helped to form us and one that continues to resonate.

WATCH MALAWI ONLINE ALL DAY!

RPCV Jason Price '01, invites FOM members to view *The Global Lives Project—Malawi*, a unique video installation and web project that he produced with Malawian counterparts last year outside of Zomba. The 24 unedited hours feature the life of Edith Kapuka, a 13 year old primary school student who lives near Domasi Mission. All 24 hours have been transcribed in Chichewa, English, and Chiyao by a team of more than 50 volunteers organized through a facebook group.

All 24 hours are online at www.dotsub.com (see “The Global Lives Project—Malawi” under the “Collections” tab) in 96 sequential 15-minute clips.

For more information, contact jasonjprice@gmail.com or find him through the group, “The Global Lives Project—Malawi”.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION LOOKS TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

Report by Sandra Lauffer

In two recent meetings of the Board of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), it was apparent that the organization's focus over the past several years on building value for its members is beginning to pay huge dividends. For those of you who are not currently members of NPCA, now is the time to consider it. NPCA is the national organization whose purpose is to connect, inform, and engage people impacted or inspired by Peace Corps. Friends of Malawi is a Member Group of NPCA. FOM has made it possible for me to represent West, Central, and Southern Africa Member Groups on the NPCA Board, for which I am currently serving as treasurer.

NPCA is devoting a tremendous amount of time and energy to developing the initiatives and resources that will enable it to play a key role in the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps. Events around that celebration will take place September 22-25, 2011, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and in countries of Peace Corps service around the world. Leading toward the anniversary, NPCA has engaged a national philanthropic consulting firm to lead a major fund-raising campaign that would support a number of initiatives. Notable among those is the development of an interactive

online community devoted to this effort, Peace Corps Connect, a social networking website that will enable you, for example, to locate the people with whom you served; share your stories, photos, and projects; create groups around your personal or professional interests; and gain current information on Malawi or other Peace Corps countries. Ultimately, the new website will greatly expand online opportunities for advocacy for Peace Corps and other shared interests, education for global understanding, mentoring of outgoing and returning PC Volunteers, sharing and archiving project and service information, and raising funds for projects in Malawi or projects that would bring your Peace Corps experience back home.

In connection with the 50th Anniversary, NPCA anticipates the dedication of a Peace Corps commemorative space on the National Mall on Sunday, September 25, 2011. The NPCA task force that explored this idea has incorporated as the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation, which is working on design concepts and Congressional authorization.

Another NPCA initiative is the MorePeaceCorps Campaign, a public awareness and legislative campaign in support of a rejuvenated Peace Corps that would

double the number of Volunteers being fielded by the time of the 50th Anniversary, with simultaneous attention to making Peace Corps more efficient and effective. The Campaign has mobilized nearly 5,000 participants and influenced President-Elect Obama to adopt its goals; more than 10,000 individuals have signed a petition to encourage him to honor that pledge.

Related to the Inaugural Parade, NPCA successfully lobbied for RPCVs to be represented with 200 participants selected by lottery from among valid entries.

As NPCA looks to 2009, it has a proposal pending with a major foundation for a pilot project looking at the viability of linking the Peace Corps community with the African diaspora to assist the rural poor in Africa. If that grant is approved, work on the Africa Rural Connect Project will begin early in 2009.

There are many reasons to become a member of NPCA and contribute to its activities. You can join NPCA and stay informed about its activities through its website, www.rpcv.org.

(Also see page 5)

CLIMBING MT. MULANJE by Rowland Bennett, PCV Malawi I, 1962-64

When Bob Moffitt and I decided to climb Mt. Mulanje, he arranged with his friend in the Malawi II Project, Dan Smith, to join us. We'd been told it was possible to get up and down in one day. We drove southeast from Blantyre and found our way to the forester's compound at the foot of the mountain, arriving at a later-than-ideal time. At the forester's station, we checked in and asked for directions to the trailhead. The forester was not in, but the wife, an unhelpful English woman, advised against our plan. We assured her we were capable and determined, so she gave vague instructions to locate the start of the path. Off we went with food and liquids packed for the day!

The start-point is about 3000 feet above sea level, the summit 9,843 feet. There are no technical challenges on Mulanje; it's all walking, albeit walking over a mile *up hill!* As we ascended, we passed through temperate and alpine environments appropriate to the elevations. Particularly attractive at a certain elevation was a plantation of temperate-zone pines, grown and harvested for crates and boxes to ship Malawi products abroad.

After some hours we found ourselves slogging through dense grass tussocks on an extensive upward slope. We didn't realize we had gone off the trail because no trail was visible in the waist-high grass. As I stepped on a tussock, my body popped upward, and stepping between them, dropped back down. Up and down, up and down. It was slow strenuous going because I didn't know where my next footfall would land. Eventually, we came to a clear trail and only then we realized we had gone off it. By now we were seriously behind schedule.

At four o'clock we reached the boulder-strewn near-top, high above the timberline. There was no vegetation except for lichen and a few low-lying, gnarly, wind-bent trees. I say near-top because the lay of the land was like two knuckles on a fist. We were on one and could look across a hundred or so yards to the higher of the two, the true summit. Bob and I felt we wouldn't have climbed Mulanje if we didn't go all the way to Sapitwa, the summit's specific name on maps. (Loosely translated, sapitwa means "He doesn't go there!")

Tired out, Dan offered to wait if we really wanted to go over. So Bob and I set out to cross the saddle while Dan perched on a boulder, watching us and enjoying the magnificent 360 degree views from the highest point in all of Africa south of Kilimanjaro. The distance was short, the challenge was great. No trail here! We were scrambling across huge and not-so-huge boulders and the going was slow. It took a full hour to cross that short distance! After photographs, a look-around and a wave back to Dan, we retraced our route and reached Dan at 6 PM. Evening was coming on fast.

Going down the mountain was much faster. We hustled, taking advantage of gravity and giant steps wherever the path was smooth. We felt no concern, no sense of fear, but at some point the encroaching darkness told us we could not reach our car that day. We had no electric torch, no tent, no night gear. We were stuck on the mountain.

On the way up, we had passed a little house and we stopped there for shelter just as full darkness came on. I say "house" because it was in the shape of a house, but the size of a child's playhouse and made of nothing but tied and woven reeds. Air passed freely through the walls and roof. In the dark, the three of us foraged outward to pull branches and twigs off trees, and gather fallen wood for a fire. Someone had a match and we created a little spot of radiant heat on the dirt floor. We ate what was left of our food. To sleep, we curled around the fire, three C-shaped bodies on raw ground. We awoke often from the chill as the fire died down to embers. We added fuel, puffing at coals to get flame again. Sometimes we had to forage again, reaching out hands into —what?— the unknown, as we groped for more branches, more fuel. Thus, uncomfortably we passed the night.

At first light, the one who awoke first woke the others. We took off, heading down the last leg to reach civilization. Approaching the forestry department area, we had to re-cross the fast flowing, cold Likabula stream. Instead of using stepping stones as the day before, we stripped off everything and splashed in the turbulence to refresh ourselves and fully awaken from our night of dusty, short, and cold sleep.

Dressed again, we reached our car. The wife came out from the house, now in a mood to communicate quite frankly what fools we had been! The forester was just then getting a rescue crew together to go up for us, perhaps for our bodies. We shrugged it off—"What's bothering her?"— and jumped into our vehicle to head back up the road to Blantyre and a good hot meal at the Peace Corps hostel.

Years later I read Laurens Van der Post's *Venture to the Interior* wherein the entire (true) story turns on the untoward deaths by exposure of other foolish "Europeans" who ventured toward Sapitwa, unprepared for grim eventualities. In our case, the fools survived.

BIG TOBACCO vs CHILDREN'S LIVES

MALAWI'S CHILD LABOR LAWS

(Adapted from P. Semu-Banda's Special to CropWatch)

According to the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science based in Oslo, Norway, there are an estimated 250 million children in the world who are involved in work that is damaging to their mental, physical and emotional development. Of these, 57 million live in Sub-Sahara Africa and an estimated 1.4 million endangered child laborers live in Malawi.

Commercial production of tobacco in Malawi goes back to 1889, when settlers from the state of Virginia introduced the crop, and Malawi's tobacco estates now are a source of economic pride. The country derives up to 70% of its foreign exchange earnings from agricultural crops with the tobacco industry making up to 10% of the country's gross domestic product. Malawi's exports account for five percent of the world's total tobacco exports and two percent of the world's total production.

Up to two million Malawians, mostly poor, depend on tobacco and related industries for income. Nearly all of about 900,000 adult growers are "small holder farmers, tobacco tenants and casual farm workers" according to a research paper by the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education (CTCRE), an independent center based at the University of California, San Francisco. The CTCRE study reports that a minimum of 78,000 children work full- or part-time in the tobacco fields. Forty-five percent are 10-14 years old and 55 percent are 7-9 years old.

The wealth generated by tobacco is not spread evenly across the country. The Malawi Tobacco Control Commission (TCC), a local government watchdog for the tobacco market, estimates that it takes \$1 for farm workers to produce a kilogram of tobacco, which they usually sell at \$.70 for a loss of \$.30 per kilo.

We have created a Connected Peace Corps page for FOM through NPCA at

<http://community.peacecorps.org/group/friendsofmalawi>

BORDER CONTROVERSY

Rising tensions and cases of harassment of Malawians living along the border of Mozambique have led the Department of Surveys in the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to try to reaffirm the border between Malawi and Mozambique—particularly the border between Makanjira and the source of Muloza River in Phalombe, a distance that spans Mangochi, Machinga and Phalombe. Currently, boundary beacons are 22 km apart and in most places neither government knows where the boundary is. The proposed distance between the new beacons is 500 meters.

Mozambique authorities have mounted border patrol posts at every point where the Malawi territory stretches deep inside theirs, and they are not allowing Malawians to cross into their territory by even an inch. Four recent abductees were fishing on Lake Chiuta and their boat broke down.

FISH FARMING IN ZOMBA

.Adapted from BBC World News America report by James Morgan

The dust scrublands of Zomba West seem an unlikely place to raise fish. Since the rains ended in April, the area has been brittle dry.

Esther Fikira says, “When we first started fish farming—people thought it was mad—they told us it will never work here.”

In a series of dirty, green ponds dug into the baked clay, the water appears murky and almost stagnant, but Esther knows that there are tasty “chambo” lurking just below the surface.

“If you had only seen the benefits this community has had from eating these fish, then you will know why I will never give my pond away,” says 50 year-old Esther.

There are now 700 fish farmers like Esther in the bushland to the west of the former capital, Zomba.

In an ambitious food security project developed by the WorldFish Centre, a member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), small-scale aquaculture is ensuring families in Malawi enough food and income to buy maize—even in years when droughts affect their crops.

The project assists farmers by digging small, rain-fed ponds of about 10x15m on their land, or anywhere the soil is suitable for retaining water.

Families like Esther’s use the ponds to raise Malawi’s common

fish species of chambo (a species of tilapia) and mlamba (catfish).

At WorldFish’s local headquarters, just down the road, Dr. Daniel Jamu and a team of scientists are breeding new varieties of chambo—selected to grow fast, fat, and feed happily on whatever waste is left over from households.

Esther uses manure from her goats and chickens to keep the pond high in nutrients which allow plankton to thrive. The fish eat the plankton. When they are full grown in about six months, they are harvested.

Esther sells most of her fish and raises enough money to buy maize when the harvest is poor and to help feed and clothe orphaned children she takes in.

“Before we had the ponds, this area suffered from a lot of poverty. We didn’t eat meat, and we lacked any source of income. But with the coming of the fish ponds, we had so much leftover to sell, I had enough money to buy fertilizer with the government subsidy,” she explains.

When the ponds are emptied, the fish silt can be dug from the base to use as fertilizer for other crops.

Joseph Ngoli of WorldFish says that it is a perfect circle of an integrated agriculture-aquaculture (IAA) system. It is

not high input fish farming, it is simple and sustainable.

Previous attempts to introduce aquaculture to Malawi failed because those who took it up thought that they no longer needed to grow maize. Fish should be just one part of a family’s agriculture.

Fish supply essential protein, calcium, and vitamin A—essential for children and the elderly, and those with HIV/AIDS. Almost one-fifth of Malawians aged 15-49 are infected and each year tens of thousands die of the disease. However, good nourishment can prolong life of these patients by up to eight years, according to research by the World Health Organization.

WorldFish has introduced aquaculture to 1,200 HIV-infected families in Malawi—doubling their average income and increasing their intake of fish by 150%. WorldFish has a target of 8,000 households in Malawi—en equivalent to 40,000 people.

Lake Chilwa provides 20% of the country’s catch, but it is vulnerable to drought and is suffering from over-fishing and environmental degradation. “Urban” fishing could be the key to easing the burden on the lake’s precious resource.

See PHOTOS page 7

POPULATION INCREASE IN MALAWI

MALAWI GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES POPULATION RISES TO 13.1 MILLION

(Adapted from report by Dickson Kashoti)

Compared to the census conducted in 1998, the population of Malawi has increased 2.8 percent per annum to a total of 13,066,320. Minister of Economic Planning and Development, Ken Lipenga, announced that the 2008 Population and Housing Census (PHC) found that 45 percent of people are found in the Southern Region, 42 percent in the Central Region and 13 percent in the Northern Region.

Lipenga said, “A major highlight of the results is the rapid increase of the population of the city of Lilongwe, which has grown in size by over 50 percent between the two censuses to 669,021, slightly overtaking the city of Blantyre, which is now at 661,444.”

There also is a notable increase in the population of the city of Mzuzu which has grown in size by about 48 percent to 128,432.

The Minister said that the results have come at a time when the government needs to update the baseline of indicators used to monitor progress toward attaining the goals of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs). Census results can be used by policy makers, program managers, and other planners, whether in the public or private sector, with updated and solid information for their decisions. This information also provides a picture of the size and distribution of the population in order to ensure food security.

This year’s population shows that there are more females (6,700,549 – 51 percent) in the country than males (6,365,771 – 49 percent).

There are 5,876,784 people in the South, 5,491,034 people in the Center and 1,698,502 in the North.



PEACE CORPS TRAINING: SAN DIEGO, CA & THE 42ND YEAR REUNION

By Steve Heyneman (Mlanje Secondary School 1966-68)

In August 1966, about 40 of us went to the new campus of the University of California San Diego, in La Jolla, California. La Jolla was a wonderful assignment. All of us were bound for the Eastern Region of Nigeria. However, the Biafra War got in the way and our little band of buddies was split into two groups. About seven women went to Niger for a Neo-Natal Public Health Program and the rest of us were sent to Malawi to work in Public Health, Education, Agriculture, Sports Development and other programs.

We had our first “official” reunion on our 40th anniversary of starting our Peace Corps experience in the summer of 2006, in Chicago. We had a blast! Being our first time, we decided to keep it going every two years “forever”. We are blessed that almost everyone in the original group is still with us. We remembered the two who were gone with a moment of personal reflection.

In May of 2008, Steve Heyneman hosted the second and 42nd year reunion in Nashville, and even more participated than in the 40th reunion. We welcomed our Country Director, Monroe G. McKay, Esq. and two of our medics, Dr. Tom Powers and Dr. George A. Little. Monroe is the fellow who helped bring us the Miranda questions from the Supreme Court. He is a national treasure to me.

After four decades without seeing each other, what might we say? Who were we? Did we have anything in common? We discovered several things. None of us had experienced a life without challenge. Health problems, children with addictions, health of parents, loss of two of our trainee members, we all have been tested in one way or another. We found out too, that each of us had been affected by our Peace Corps experience and that it had lasted a lifetime. Some had continued on to become doctors and nurses, others to be social workers, teachers, bankers, or business entrepreneurs.

There is something about having lived without electricity or running water on the edge of a desert that makes for a better company manager. All of us seemed to have done what we have done better and with more “feeling”. Some continued to work in developing countries. Several were active in assisting charities in Malawi. Even those who worked on local issues were deeply affected by our early experiences. It helped “set us up” for the challenges and the empathy needed in life. Lastly, it is simply true—though we had not seen each other in four decades— that we found each other to be deeply interesting people. This is why we decided to meet every two years to say hello and to renew our new-found friendships.

Recently, John Strain initiated an article about why RPCVs have found their way to their local Rotary Clubs as part of their continuing service to their communities, part of the “third leg” of being a PCV. Details of the article published in the August 2008 issue of *The Rotarian* may be found at www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/TheRotarian/Pages/PeaceCorps.aspx.

Bill Schmidt is working with Kevin Quigley, President of the NPCA, and others there, to have an article about how PCVs and RPCVs can link to Rotary Clubs around the world for help with project fund raising in their respective countries of service.

The next reunion is scheduled for 2010 in Kansas City, MO, hosted by Bill Schmidt.
(Photo next page.)



Here's the gang, from left to right: front: Penni St Hilaire; Stewart Wolff, MD; Edwina White; Mary Lou Murphy Shaw, MD; back row left to right: Tom Powers, MD; Buddy Jackson; John Tomczyk; Steve Heyneman (host), PhD; Liz Wolff; Jim Pressler, MD; Kathy Pressler; Sally Heyneman and John Strain. Not pictured: Monroe G. McKay and George A Little.

HELP US! IF YOU HAVE UP-TO-DATE ADDRESSES FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, PLEASE LET JOHN STAUB AND KRISTEN GEORGE KNOW.

Matthew Bettridge
 David J. Binkowski
 Charles Broy
 Bobette Button
 Joanna Cestaro
 Mary Tingay Collishaw
 Catherine (Pippen) Cook
 Christopher & Linda Curran
 Patricia D. Dugan
 Patrick Danley
 Molly Dunn
 Tom. Marion & Mari Ehmann
 Scot M. Faulkner
 Erin Maria Gay
 Preston Gibson
 Laura Goeke

Eileen M. Haney
 Charles (Woody) Jewett,
 Jennifer Johnson
 Kimberly A. Kaczmarek
 William David Kernan
 PJohn Kirwan
 Theo John Lacy
 Patrick Lee
 Elizabeth Lefebvre
 Felix Lindeire
 Thomas & Erica
 McShane-Calizi
 Colleen Moroney
 Nathan A Olah
 Debra Roe
 Beth Skidmore
 Shirley Smith
 Leslie Stroud
 Daniel Talbot
 Kimberly Walther
 Ken Wilson

!ZIKOMO, THANKS, YEWO!

Friends Of Malawi wishes to thank members and donors for their support.

For the 2008 year, FOM dispersed \$77,785.72 to be used for projects and small grants that help support groups and programs within Malawi. To print and mail two FOM Newsletters and for operational costs, \$1,671.06 was spent. To become a member contact FOM Treasurer, Lance Cole 7940 SW 11th Ave, Portland OR 97219.

FOM Newsletter
C/o E. Evans or F. Ushe
Springfield College
263 Alden Street
Springfield, MA 01109 USA

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SPRINGFIELD, MA
PERMIT NO. 693

Return Service Requested

MALARIA VACCINE TRIAL

Malaria, caused by a parasite and spread by mosquitoes, kills nearly a million people a year—most of them children in Africa.

Researchers trying to create the world's first malaria vaccine are launching a massive medical trial involving 16,000 children that could be the largest such trial ever conducted on infants and children in Africa.

British drug maker GlaxoSmithKline is teaming with PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and African clinics and research centers to develop a vaccine.

In Phase III trials, data show that the vaccine candidate RTS,S/AS can be administered as part of existing African national immunization programs. In children aged 5 to 17 months, the vaccine reduced the risk of clinical episodes of malaria by 53 percent over an eight month follow-up period.

The massive vaccine trials will be conducted in

Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, **Malawi**, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Dr. Christial Loucq, Director of the Malaria Vaccine Initiative, said that the project has been working to upgrade laboratory, computer and other equipment in those countries, train technicians, and even help develop local equivalents of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ensure the trials are monitored properly.

The Malaria Vaccine Initiative has spent more than \$107 million on the project and has not yet calculated how much more it will spend. GlaxoSmithKline has spent \$300 million so far. Estimates are that it will spend up to \$100 million more.

Since 2003, much groundwork had been laid in preliminary trials involving 4,000 children. Researchers interviewed in Johannesburg said that even if their vaccine does not succeed, the widespread investment needed to conduct trials in Africa will provide better communications, research and other infrastructure that could be used searching for vaccines against AIDS.

For the full article see the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 12/8/08.