

METROPOLITAN

Restaurant benefit fights African famine

by Robert Lothian

Nearly 200 people attended a benefit dinner for starving Ethiopians at Jarra's Ethiopian Restaurant Sunday.

For a \$10 donation they were served an Ethiopian meal of mild or hot chicken, "Dora Wat," or beef, "Zigone," split lentils, mixed vegetables, tomato salad and "Injera," Ethiopian bread.

Jarra's owners, Petros Jarra and his wife Aina Sultessa, said the money raised will be channeled through the Red Cross and a church for distribution to Ethiopian communities.

"What we saw on TV was shocking and depressing," said Sultessa, 29, who came to the U.S. in 1978 to study nursing.

"We are much better off here," said Petros Jarra, 39, a former business student at Walla Walla College who came to the U.S. ten years ago. "We thought we could do more than just send a few checks," he said.

The couple said they wanted to organize an event that would involve the community and also pull together significant help for Ethiopia.

All food and beverages for the dinner were donated, said Jarra, and restaurant employees, customers and members of Portland's Ethiopian community volunteered as waiters and waitresses.



Jarra's restaurant owners Petros Jarra and Aina Sultessa, take time out during their Ethiopian benefit dinner Sunday in Southeast Portland. (Photo: Kris Altucher)

Waiter Bruce Borquist, a former peace corps volunteer in Ghana, said he was "just a faithful customer" who wanted to help.

"It just seemed like a good thing to do," said Sherrill Bower, who came from Eugene with her friends Becky Wilson and Emmanuel Meneakis.

"There is something ironic about sitting in front of beautiful plates of food . . . and thinking that we're doing something," said Meneakis. "There needs to be more thought

about the way food and power are distributed in the world," he said.

People who want to help but who were unable to attend the dinner can send checks to the downtown branch of the U.S. bank payable to "Jarra's benefit dinner for starving Ethiopians," said Jarra.

The couple comes from the town of Kuyera Shashamane, about 100 miles south of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. "The area we know, especially near where I was born," said Jarra, "is something like Oregon," with mountains, lakes and evergreen trees. Most of the coun-

try is a highland plateau with a constant year-round climate, "something like Southern California in the wintertime," he said. "It's beautiful."

But for several seasons the normal monsoon rains haven't come. "When there is no rain there is no crop and when there is no crop you are going to get hungry," said Jarra.

Something similar happened in 1973, said Jarra, when he and his wife were students in Ethiopia. "We fasted for a week and we collected some breakfast money, some clothes, blankets and we chose a representative to go up there and give it to (the victims)." But this famine, said Jarra, is the worst yet. "It is really encircling the country," he said.

The famine is complicated by Ethiopia's political situation, they said. Military-socialist government came to power in the mid-70's, and a war for independence has continued in the northern province of Eritrea for 25 years.

They would like to go back and visit friends and relatives, they say, but fear that once in the country they will not be allowed to return makes them stay. "Our plan was to go back, and because of the change of government there was no improvement toward free movement. We decided to wait and see," said Sultessa. In the meantime we started this business," Jarra has been at Southeast 6th and Morrison for 1 1/2 years. "Portland accepted us well and we are very happy now," said Jarra.

"What I want to say," he said, "is to thank the people of Portland greatly for their kind help and response . . . you never know who your friends are until you get into a situation where you need them."

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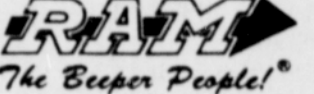
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Herb Cawthorne addresses fasters at the Food Bank's celebrity no-food lunch. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Fasters raise funds

by Robert Lothian

Some of Portland's important people sat at tables set with silverware and linen Thursday, but rather than eat, those present filled their plates with thoughts of starving people.

The Celebrity Fast no-food lunch at the Portland Building attracted attention to the Interagency Food Bank's seventh annual Fast for the Hungry.

The Food Bank is asking People to fast for a day during the holiday season and then donate the money saved to the agency. Africa is the focus of this year's campaign. Ten percent of donations toward the Food Bank's goal of \$30,000 will go to Oxfam America for famine relief in Ethiopia and other African countries. Oxfam is the national sponsor of the Fast for the Hungry.

The remainder of the donations will go to help hungry people locally. The Food Bank donated over 3,600,000 lbs of food to 144 Portland agencies in 1983-84.

Present Thursday were Sigrid Clark, wife of the mayor-elect, Doug Rogers of the Interagency Food Bank, Herb Cawthorne, Mike Lindberg, Gladys McCoy, State Senator Margie Hendriksen, Jonathan Nicholas and a special appearance by folksingers Peter, Paul and Mary.

Waiters and waitresses took symbolic orders from celebrity fasters reading from Portland restaurant menus. Then the fasters forked

over the amount they would have paid for the lunch. Over \$1,000 was raised.

Valera Washburn, executive director of the Leukemia Association of Oregon, ordered Moussaka and a Pepsi from the Vat and Tonsur menu, worth about \$5. "I came thinking I was going to cheat with a cup of soup on the way to the office," she said, but after listening to the speeches she changed her mind.

The fast "that tweeks our tummies" should be a reminder of the real fast going on in the world today, notably in Africa, said Sigrid Clark.

"How many deaths will it take before we know too many people have died?" asked Peter Yarrow, invoking the song, "Blowing in the Wind," which he and Paul Stookey and Mary Travers made famous.

Mary Travers said she witnessed hunger during a trip to El Salvador. "When politics gets in the way of humanity, there is something wrong with politics, and with us," she said.

City council candidate Herb Cawthorne called for a "peace corps of the heart." The people gathered and thoughts of the famine made him think of a phrase, "There, but for the grace of God, go I," said Cawthorne.

Low Church, fast coordinator for the Interagency Food Bank, said donations can be sent care of "Fast for the Hungry," 3939 S.E. 26th, Portland, 97202. Phone 239-5437 for more information.

YWCA holds holiday bazaar

Holiday gifts, arts and crafts, decorations and lunch will be available at the Sugar Plum Faire, Dec. 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Downtown YWCA, 1111 S.W. 10th Ave. This Holiday Bazaar is held in conjunction with the Park Block Revels and marks the kickoff of the Annual Westwind Christmas Tree Sale.

The Tree Sale, running through Dec. 24, will offer fresh Scotch pine, Grand, Noble, and Douglas Fir trees, wreaths and holly. The sale, held on the Downtown YWCA Patio, will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., weekend and 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-6:30 p.m. weekdays. Both the tree sale and the Bazaar proceeds help send children to Westwind, the YWCA camp on the Pacific. Last summer, over 150 people were able to attend camp who otherwise would not have been able. Call the Downtown YWCA for more information, 223-6281.

Engineering school tour

The University of Portland School of Engineering will open its doors to visitors Saturday, Dec. 1, to give the public a view of the school and its offerings.

The visitation day, primarily aimed at new or transfer students and their parents, will begin at 12:30 p.m. A tour of the campus and engineering facilities will be included.

For registration or additional information call the University of Portland School of Engineering at (503)283-7314.

Used toys for needy

The Portland Fire Bureau Toy and Joy makers will be operating from a new location this year located at 1122 N. Williams Ave., corner of N. Williams and Hassalo. This site has been donated by Hanna Industries.


Christmas is nearly here again and we need new or very repairable toys and/or cash donations (and it's all tax deductible).

People thinking to donate can drop their toys at any Portland fire station and mail all cash donations to the Toy and Joy Makers, c/o the Portland Fire Bureau, 55 S. W. Ash, Portland 97204.

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