

AGAZI ALUMNI NEWS

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Agazi is a high school located in Adigrat, Tigray, Ethiopia.

This one was Historic

The 13th annual meeting and fundraising night of Agazi School Alumni Association – North America was held on July 5, 2008 in Arlington, VA. It was concluded with another successful year and with historic significance. This is the 4th time ASAA –NA had it in DC area.

Both the meeting and fundraising dinner party were well attended. Thanks to our member, **Brikity Hagos**, the meeting was held at an elegant hall, the American Institute of Architecture (AIA) in DC. Our thanks to AIA for letting us have the meeting in their hall.

The meeting began at 10 AM with introduction of attendants. This was one of the few meetings that were well attended..

A copy of the slide presentation of the agenda and discussion was distributed.

Agenda:

Auditors' annual report

Board annual report

Member recognition

Financial report

Projects: Current, and long term projects

Open discussion

Next year's annual meeting, where and when?

Election of 2008-2011 Board members

Additional input to agenda

Accomplishments and difficulties

After reports, the current project to build teachers' lounges in all 7 high schools was discussed. These were for Hawzein, Edaga Hamus, Fatsi, Dawhan, Bizet, Yalem Berhan and Agazi. It was announced that the construction of the lounge for Agazi High School would be built by an alumnus donor in Ethiopia (Dr. Mekonen Hagos and his family). ASAA -NA will be responsible for furnishing the building. Also, Fatsi High School may be sponsored by an alumnus in DC, Ato Haile Sadik. Out of the schools, which received our letters requesting an estimate for the lounges (or other priority instead of lounge), only 3 schools

responded (Edaga Hamus, Fatsi and Dawhan). So far, the most detailed estimate is from Dawhan, for about \$30,000. Edaga Hamus had a new problem after a fire destroyed some of the classrooms; their priority is to rebuild the school. Bizet high school has also sent its report recently.

There was also a special presentation of recognition for six members for their outstanding work to advance ASAA's objectives. One of those recognized was Berhe D. Biru. Many of you know him or have seen him on our annual event videos. He is among the very few members who can claim they have not missed any or more than one meeting out of the last 13 meetings. His dedication is not just attending annual events or making donations but he makes it his duty to let all his contacts know about our alumni association and its objectives. He encourages them to participate in any way they can. Thank you, Berhe for all your dedication. The others were Tadesse Gebru, Michael Gebru (both from Washington DC area), Kahsay Abraham (ASAA Board public relations), Seattle as a group, and Kahsay Abraha Bisrat (ASAA Audit committee).

After discussions and recognitions, it was time for electing the new Board and Auditors for the next 3 years (2008-2011). The following members were elected. Zelalem Woldu (Dallas), Aster Eyob (Houston), Girmay Tesfagiorgis (DC), Kahsay Abrham (Denver), Ogbazhi Melles (DC), Michael Gebre (Denver). To be joined by one representative from Seattle. The new members of the audit committee are: Hagos Gebre (DC), Kidane Teklehaimanot (Denver) and a third person to be nominated by Seattle. At the end, next year's meeting was announced (more on that below).

The historic part of this year's event comes from the presence of a couple that was teachers at Agazi in the 1960's. Yes, some of you were not even born and many of you might have been their students. The Association was fortunate that **Mrs. Louise and Mr. Warren Siegel** made it to the dinner party from the Midwest. They were Peace Corps volunteers in Adigrat from 1966 to 1968. That would be 1958/59 to 1960 Ethiopian calendar. The members are grateful for

their service in Adigrat and for joining us at this year's. Unfortunately, we did not get a chance to introduce them to all. We were hoping they would make a short comment about their stay in Adigrat back then. They arrived so early as invited, at 6 PM, that by the time most of us were at the hall, they were ready to leave. We forgot to inform them to arrive at 8 PM, as that was when most started showing up. By the way, we need to do something about the culture of time. They would have appreciated the punctuality of Seattle.

Another important figure at the event was Leul Ras Mengesha Seyoum who had visited Agazi High School just months before leaving his position as the governor of Tigray. Also present were Ato Bahta Gebrehiwot and w/o Bisrat Meresa who happened to be in the US for a visit from Ethiopia and made it to the event (no, he was not asked to sing).

As always, there were not too many speeches or other activities to interrupt the party. The only interruptions were during the fundraising announcements and tehlo auction. The rest was all music thanks to our regular entertainers Tadesse, Yayne and Genet. We also had a guest musician, Solomon Haile from Chicago.

In fundraising, this was as close as it gets to Seattle's 2007 fundraising. The Association collected about \$24,000 after major expenses are paid (unaudited). In addition, there is about \$8,000 in pledges. If all pledges are collected, the Association will be raising \$32,000 (note that figures are rounded up). More was expected from Denver fundraising that was planned for September 7, 2008. For reasons the members already know or will read later, it did not happen.

Next year's host will be Texas. It was announced at the end of the meeting that the reunion will be held in Houston, TX. Considering Houston is home to NASA and near water, this location may be better used for the second day event (July 5, Sunday picnic, touring and more party and fundraising). The first day event (July 4, 2009), the meeting and fundraising will be in Dallas, TX. So, plan ahead and if you can, use your Monday stay to visit historic and famous places like NASA in Houston. Of course this will require careful planning in regards to places to stay and return flight arrangements.

Also plan ahead for 2010 when ASAA will have its annual meeting in Adigrat. If you are planning for vacation in Ethiopia for 2010, please arrange it so that

it is sometime in June/July. Exact dates will be announced in the future.

The new Board held its first meeting on July 6, 2008. Besides discussing on strategies, the board members made job assignments. Our thanks go to our DC hosts who did a superb job. There was plenty of Tehlo and meiss. There was more meiss left even after the picnic. The following is a list sent to us from DC area for people who participated in all activities.

Thank you DC

The DC committee and ASAA-NA Board would like to thank all volunteers who made it all happen.

I. Organizers: They worked diligently for the six months to make 2008 ASAA-NA event a success.

Mike Gebru (DC chapter public relations, 2005-2008)	
Benyam Tsehaye (also served casher on July 5, 2008 and he is a newly elected treasurer, 2008-2011)	
Alemtsehai Gebru	Birikity Atsbeha
Gebreyesus Enged	Tadesse Gebru
Mizan Tsegay	Aster Michael

II. Members and supporters who scarified their time and place to prepare the delicious food and decoration of the hall.

Birikti Atsbeha	Aster Michael
Mizan Tsegay	Desta Asbeha
Alemtsehai Gebru also was our video/camer person	Letebrahan and Fisehaye Girami
Berhan Hailu and Kasa Hailemariam	Mulugeta Hailemariam

III. Members and supporters who helped at the fundraising event to make it a successful night.

Abezu Abadi	Alem G. Tsadik
Alem G. Mariam	Almaz Atsbeha
Eyasu Sebhat (DC chapter treasurer, 2005-2008)	
Eyeru Hailemariam (DC chapter chair, 2005-2008)	
Teklay Kahsay	Gebrehiwort W. Gebriel
Genet Reda (Wassie)	Giday Kindeya
Hailemariam Asefa	Hailemariam Desta
Mulu Teklemichael	Solomon Teklu
Saba Taddese	Aregai (N.J)
Mebrihit G. Tsadik	Almaz G. Tsadik
Mebrat Gebru	Mulu Alem Asefa
Tesfamariam Woldu (New DC chapter chairman)	Yohannes Hagos

IV. The participation of our youth deserves our appreciation. We hope they will continue to participate in community services and learn about their own culture. We must encourage our youth to continue the good work

Hiwot Tesfamariam	Meheret Ogbazghi
Marta Hailemariam	Shewit Yohannes
Nazeret Aregawai	Melaat Yohannes

Financial report for July 5, 2008 (Not audited)

Source	Pledged	collected
Donation collected		\$12,190
Pledge not yet collected	\$8,460	
Tehlo auction & sale		\$2,250
T-shirt		\$1,040
Sale of drink at the event		\$2,331
Tickets sold		\$15,840
Total Pledge/collected	\$8,640	\$33,651

Expenses		
Supplies		\$1,140
Entertainment (includes rental & entertainers' fees)		\$2,650
Hall rental, etc		\$4,600
Total expense paid for event		\$8,390
T-shirt & video expenses		\$1,819
Total expense		\$10,209
Net revenue collected		\$23,442

The following have made a cash/check donation

A Family Pharmacy--Apple Valley	500
Aba-Jebel Aba-Mecha	100
Abeba Woinareg (Lemlem G.medhin)	100
Abera Hagos Abay (Dr.)	500
Abraham Tesfay	100
Abrehet Gebreyesus	60
Abrha Derso (DR.)	200
Adanesh Fissehay	200
Akberet Ghebray	100
Alem G. Tsadik and Mana Berhe	500
Alemshet Workie	100
Alganesh Seyoum	30
Ameha Amene, Dr.	150
Aregawi Abraham kishean	200
Asfeha Teklehaimanot	100

Asgedom Hagos	100
Aster Eyob	200
Aster Michael	200
Atse Yohannes Alumni	500
Benyam Tsehaye	200
Berhane Gared	100
Besrat Menker	100
Birikti Hagos	150
Desta Abadi & Tsadkan G/Yohannes	200
Eleni Tareke	200
Gaim B Tedla	100
Gebreselassie A. Tedla	100
Gebremeskel Kahsai & Leterbrehan (Axum Restaurant, DC) ----->	200
Getachew G. Tsadik	100
Girmai Tesfagiorgis	100
Habtom Bisrat	40
Hadis K.mariam & Meheret Berhe	200
Hailesellassie Zeresenay	100
Hagos & Lemlem	100
Hagos Gebrai	100
Halefom Berhe & Family	200
Intehabu Berhe & Firewoyni Hadgu	100
Kahsay Abraha G.M	100
Kahsay G. Tsadik and Birtukan Mola	300
Lemlem Mesfin	100
Louise & Warren Siegel	60
Makeda Haileselassie	100
Mebrhit G/Tsadik	100
Mengesha Seyoum, Leul Ras	100
Michael Gebre, (Dr.) & Selam Girma	200
Mihreteab Beyene	100
Mizan Tsegay and Welday Kahsay	300
Mulualem Assefa	100
Mulugeta & Zuryash	200
Okbazgi Melles and Desta	200
Rezene Gebreselassie	100
Ribka Girmay	100
Semhal Tesfay G/Kidan	100
Solomon Teklu	100
Tadesse Meherete	50
Tafere Haileselassie	100
Tekie G. Melles & Genet Desta	100
TesfaAlem Gebremeskel, Dr.	1000
Tesfamariam & Letemariam Weldu	200
Tesfamariam Baraki (Aba)	100
Tesfay Abraha	100
Tsegazeab Tesfamariam (G.medhin)	200
Wellela Haileselassie	200
Yeshi and Mitiku Ashebir	200
Zelalem Woldu & Negisti Hadgu	200
Zerabruk Abay	100
Zerusenay Desta (Dr.)	300
Zufan G. Mariam and Dejen Tesema	150
Zufan Hadish Sebhat	200

The following have pledged (but not paid at the time of this publication)

Aregash Abrha	200
Asfaw Hadish	300
Azmera Hailu	200
Berhan Hailu & Kassa Hailemariam	200
Berhane Hagos	300
Bruck Girmay	500
Ebeza Mezgebu	100
Elizabeth Mezgebu	100
Elsa Negusse	100
F. Haile Fessuh	200
Gabriel (G. Hiwot) Halefom	200
Gebretsadik Niree	100
Gebrewahid Woldu (Dr.)	100
Genet Tsehaye	200
Hagos Gebre	150
Hailemariam Assefa	300
Hailemelkot Hagos	100
Hailu Girmai	200
Mouz Atsbaha	100
Queen of Sheba Restaurant	300
Rezene & Rigbe Berhe	200
Sebhatu Mehari Gebre & Almaz	200
Selamawit G. Selassie	60
Solomon Hagos	200
Teame Embaye (Dr.)	500
Teka Kelele Sahlu & Zebyideru	100
Tesfahun Kahsay Kidanu	200
Tesfai G.egziabher & Letebrhan Tesfai	200
Tesfaye Ambaye	100
Tilahun Beyene (Dr.)	200
Tsega Haile	100
Wihib Ambaye (Dr.)	150
Yohannes Woldegabriel	300
Zelalem Tsefay (Dr.)	2000

language in Agazi School for three weeks. Although the duration looks short, it is a good start as it is a new imitative/area that the Alumni can advance it in the future. The volunteers will cover all their costs including hotel accommodation in Adigrat. If everything goes okay with these volunteers, it is believed that this undertaking will pave the way for more volunteers for longer period of time in the future.

❖ Meskel celebration

As they have done it last year, ASAA members in Ethiopia celebrated Meskel in Adigrat under the slogan “nemskeley dereb kebero hazaley”. Here is Dessalegn’s summary e-mail report.

The major events in brief:

A group of people took the Selam Bus from Addis and many also travelled individually. The owner of Milano Hotel in Mekell invited all guests for lunch before we proceed to Adigrat.

There was a warm and unforgettable welcoming ceremony by residents of Adigrat followed by tree planting ceremony on one of the recently completed tarmac street (Dr. Mengesha house to Kambo). The Mekell chapter invited us for dinner (Tehillo and mes) at Geza Gebreselassie.

On Friday half day report followed by discussion on the Alumni’s activities; a committee was formed to work on the strategic plan as part of the measures to strengthening the Alumni.

On Friday night a spectacular fire work from the top of Ethiopia Hotel followed by live music – Milano Hotel Band.

Saturday morning was Demera – cultural music and dancing, as usual breath taking. Sunday

morning was a tour to Agazi School, and some cottage industries that recently start operating in Adigrat. In the afternoon, a discussion was held with local authorities in the presence of Adigrat town people on development and governance. A lot of issues and questions were raised and discussed in this forum.

The city Administration together with local people organized a dinner party to all visitors; Tehello, mes and Gezem. On Monday some people went to Axum to visit the recently re-erected obelisk.

The sponsors for this year’s Meskel celebration were:

- Dr. Mekonnen Hagos, owner of Bio-Medical College
- Ato Benyam Berhane, owner of Gezanna Real Estate
- Ato Mulugeta Gebremedhin, owner of Milano Hotel.

News from ASAA in Ethiopia

❖ Volunteer teaching at Agazi

ASAA Addis organized former Agazi students who are currently studying in Addis Ababa University to form a sub-chapter of ASAA Addis. These students are ready to help in different fields during their winter vacation.

The other good news from Addis is that they have secured 6 Irish volunteers to teach the English

The above mentioned people are all time supporters of the Alumni and we are proud of them.

Video of 2008 is ready

The video (DVD) for the 2008 annual meeting and fundraising is ready. For a copy, please contact DC or Denver chapters.

DC Chapter Christmas Dinner Party

DC chapter sent this announcement for those who are in DC area or will be in that area at the time.

The new ASAA-DC committee is getting ready to host all Agazians and Agazi supporters for a dinner and relaxation on **13 December 2008**. We had been doing this for the last four years and has been a successful event. The demand was high and your committee is getting ready to make it more enjoyable. This year there will be a lot of activities that may surprise you. Please do not miss this gathering. The main objective of this dinner is to keep our community together and inform our members on all activities. We have limited time (6pm - 12AM). Come on time prepared to have good time.

The address:
James Building
1111 Army Navy Drive
Crystal City, VA 22202

The building is on the corner of "Army Navey drive and Joyce street".

Arrive: 5:30-6PM
Dinner: 6:30-7:30 PM
Announcement: 7:30-8:00PM
Program and activity: 8PM-12AM

We will miss him

On September 6, 2008 a day before we were to hold our Denver Chapter annual fundraising, we lost an alumnus and a friend due to a car accident. Solomon Gebregziabher, a husband, a father, and a recently elected Denver chapter chairman of ASAA died when his car was hit by a drunk driver who crossed a stop sign. Many of you may know him in person and if you did not, you have seen him in our Toronto fundraising video. This has been a great loss not only to his family but also devastating to our community. His body was taken to Adigrat where he was buried. His family and friends appreciate the support they received (both material and moral) during this tragic loss.

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