

Yelm woman pens second book

By Steven Wyble

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Goodbyes aren't always forever.

In 1977 former Yelm resident Ruth Jacobson and her husband Harold left Liberia, which had been their home for six years, and said goodbye to all the people they'd met there.

Ruth's new book, "Take Time, Yah: Tales From Liberia," takes its name from a Liberian expression that means, "Goodbye for now."

While Ruth and Harold always wanted to go back to Liberia, they never returned, said Ruth's daughter, Judith Yarrow, who helped produce the book.

Even so, the book title represents the pieces of the Jacobsons that stayed behind in Liberia, and the pieces of Liberia they took home with them in their hearts.

Ruth and Harold first traveled to Liberia as Peace Corps volunteers in 1971.

They were both in their 50s and looking for an adventure, Ruth writes in the prologue of her first book, "You Never Try, You Never Know."

"We had always warned our two daughters that when they had completed school and left home, we didn't plan to sit around and wait for them to come visit nor did we expect to be available as baby sitters," she writes.

"Our daughters were now well out of college and on their own. And we, in our mid-50s, were ready for some kind of adventure."

Ruth knows her stories connect with people. The first book sold enough copies to warrant a second printing, said Yarrow.

When Yarrow helped her mother sort through letters for the first book, they also came across the stories she had written.

"We thought it would be good to do something with those stories. We had enough material to do the second book," she said.

Ruth said she wasn't thinking about compiling the stories into a book when she wrote them.

"There was always something happening that I just wanted to write about," she said.

Whereas "You Never Try, You Never Know" is told through letters Ruth sent to her family, "Take Time, Yah" is a collec-

tion of anecdotes from the couple's time in Liberia.

The second book spans the entire six years the couple lived in Liberia, whereas the first book focuses primarily on three particular years, noted Yarrow. It also contains stories not told in the first book.

Because Peace Corps volunteers are encouraged to take a neutral stance on political issues in the countries they serve in, Ruth had to hold back from expressing any criticism of the Liberian government in the letters printed in the first book, she said.

In the stories presented in the second book, she was able to share her opinion more openly.

After Ruth and Harold left Liberia, their experiences there changed the way they lived back in the United States. Ruth said they lived more simply, with less emphasis on material gain.

Ruth said she and Harold still keep in touch with people they met in Liberia.

The benefit of putting all her experiences down on paper is that she can share them with anyone who reads the book.

"It feels right to ... share those sto-



Photo provided by Ruth Jacobson

Ruth Jacobson's second book about her experiences in Liberia, "Take Time, Yah," takes its name from a Liberian expression that means, "Goodbye for now."

ries," she said.

■ Ruth Jacobson holds a book signing to promote "Take Time, Yah," 1-3 p.m. Aug. 6 at Colonial Inn, 3730 14th Ave. S.E., Olympia.